THE TRAINING, MOBILIZATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF CENTRAL AMERICAN MISSIONARIES INTO GLOBAL MISSIONS

A THESIS-PROJECT

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To my Central American brothers and sisters who have obeyed God's missional call, and to Debbie, my loving spouse, who has supported and encouraged me throughout many hours of study and the completion of this thesis-project.

Thank you.

Listen - Obey - Don't Quit!

— Loren Cunningham, *Spiritual Awakening Is Coming*

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ABBREVIATIONS

D.Min.	Doctor of Ministry
GCTS	Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
SST	Saved to Serve and Transform
UofN	University of the Nations
YWAM	Youth With A Mission
ExecMAL	Executive Master of Art in Leadership

ABSTRACT

Many Central Americans sense God's call to enter Global Missions, but only a few make it to the field, and those that do often leave the field prematurely. This thesis-project shows that Central Americans are both qualified and needed to complete God's mission. The research identifies the primary obstacles hindering Central Americans from fulfilling their missional call. The final chapter addresses the need for better training, support, networking, and mobilization of Central Americans into global missions in the context of YWAM and the University of the Nations and offers three recommendations with possible solutions to overcome these obstacles.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

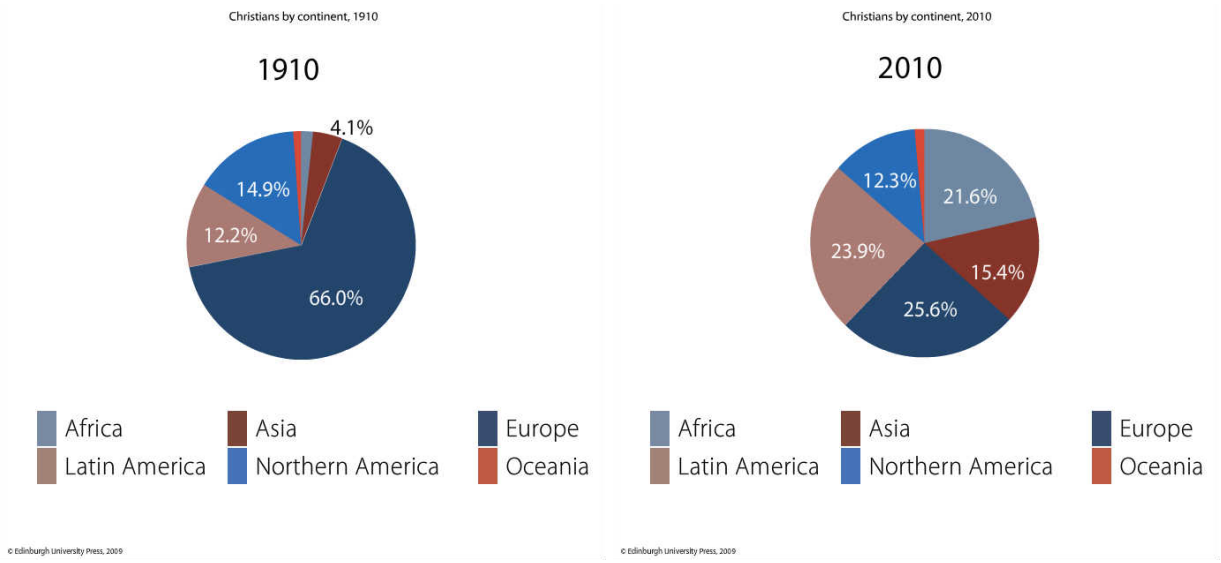
How can Youth With A Mission (YWAM) see an increase in Central Americans trained through the University of the Nations courses, mobilized and sustained as full-time staff in global missions? This project addresses the need for better training, networking, and the means for creative mobilization of Central Americans into global missions in the context of YWAM and YWAM's mission multiplier, the University of the Nations (UofN). To better understand the context, it is first necessary to look at an overview of Christianity in Central America, followed by an examination of the problem within the framework of the history, beliefs, values, and mission of YWAM.

The Shift

The mission starts with God, and the mission is God's, *Missio Dei.* His mission flows from him and manifests through his people, the church. He is unchanging, and his missional call from Genesis to Revelation has not changed. A hundred years ago, the Majority Church was in the Global North, so naturally, missionary endeavors originated in the North, but as noted by Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross in *The Atlas of Global Christianity,* "Over the past 100 years, Christianity has experienced a profound shift in its ethnic and linguistic composition. In 1910, over 80% of all Christians lived in Europe and Northern America. By 2010, this had fallen to less than 40%, with the majority of Christians located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America."[1]

[1] Todd Michael Johnson and Kenneth R Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 8.

Figure 1. 1910 to 2010 Global Christianity Comparison, (Johnson and Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 8.)



In the Global South, which includes Central America, the shift comes not only as a great privilege but a responsibility to be Christ's witness to all nations. Brazil, at 40,000, and South Korea, at 35,000 missionaries, are now the number two and three mission-sending nations globally, only to be overshadowed by the USA at 135,000 missionaries sent.[2] This gives hope for Central America to rise up as a missionary sending force as well.

When breaking down the world by regions, Mexico and Belize are included as part of Central America in *The Atlas of Global Christianity*.[3] For this regional summary the geographical area of Central America research will not include Mexico and Belize. The region will be defined by the YWAM Central America Area Circle Team (ACT). YWAM's Central

[2] World Christian Database." *World Christian Database*, Center for Study of Global Christianity, December 27, 2022, 12:08pm, www.worldchristiandatabase.org/.

[3] Johnson and Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*,182.

America ACT region comprises Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Mexico and Belize will only be used if the data available includes them.

Central America has a population of 186,051,991.[4] This puts Central America as a whole, just under the population of Brazil. By removing Mexico and Belize, the population of YWAM's Central America ACT region is 50,033,819. This is the size of South Korea. Given these similar demographics, it is not unreasonable to see Central America become a mission-sending force.

A Regional Summary of Christianity in Central America

Except for Belize, Central America shares a common Catholic cultural framework and legacy with the rest of Latin America. Belize became an official British Colony in 1871, which set it on a different course. For the rest of Central America, the introduction and propagation of Catholicism throughout the region initiated and grew out of the conquest of Spain into Latin America. Until the 20th century, Catholicism remained the predominant expression of Christianity. Even though there has been tremendous growth in evangelical Christianity, especially with the Pentecostal movement, Catholicism remains the predominant religion in the area of cultural identity.

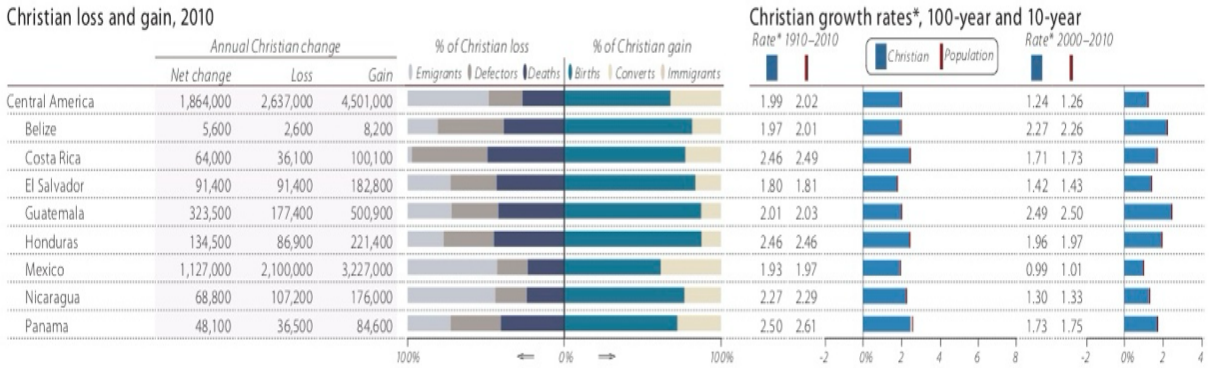
Although this is true, there has been a shift within Christianity. Cuban historian Ondina E. González states, "While in other areas of the world, one can speak of Christianity mainly in terms of growth and contraction, this is not the case for Central America, where roughly the same percentage of the population is Christian today as was 100 years ago."[5] The following chart

[4] "Worldometers," June 27, 2023, 9:57am, http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/central-america-population/.

[5] Gonzalez Ondina, Johnson and Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 183.

shows the 2010 Central America's Christian loss and gains and one hundred and ten-year growth rates.

Figure 2. Central America Christian Loss, Gains and Growth, (Johnson and Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 185.)



The first Congress on Christian Work in Latin America (CCWLA) took place in Panama in February 1916. It was patterned after Edinburgh 1910 and in reaction to Edinburgh 1910. "The CCWLA was organized by the New York based Committee on Cooperation in Latin America (CCLA) because the Edinburgh Conference excluded consideration of Latin America from its proceedings, due to controversy over the appropriateness of Protestant evangelism in the ostensibly Roman Catholic region."[6] This was the beginning of a shift in Latin American Christianity.

As stated earlier, even though the overall percentage has not changed much, the data gathered shows a shift in Christianity internally. Speaking of this shift, Gonzalez continues, "Over the course of the twentieth century, Protestant groups made significant inroads into

[6] Miguel Escobar, in notes to records in the Burke Library Archives of Union Theological Seminary, New York.

Catholic hegemony, and within Catholicism itself there were revivals. Yet the best word to describe the current state of Christianity in Central America is diversity."[7]

In 1910, of all the Christians in Central America, 99% were Catholic. In 2010, the percentage of Catholics lowered to approx. 85%, with the Anglican, Independent, Marginal, Orthodox, and Protestant groups now making up the remaining 15%. Currently, one sees that Independent/Protestant growth has increased even further in countries like Guatemala at 29.58% and El Salvador at 32.7%.[8] If Mexico is removed from the stats given in the World Christian Database, the percentage of Catholics lowers to approximately 78% for the area defined by YWAM Central America.

"Independent churches in Central America had enormous growth rates during the twentieth century. The region was home to virtually no Independents in 1910, but there were over 7.5 million in 2010 (average annual growth of 9.05%)."[9] The current annual population growth is just under 1%.[10] If they continue on the same trajectory, past and current growth patterns indicate that Protestants, Independents, and Marginals will be the region's primary source of Christian conversion as shown in Figure 3.

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[7] Gonzalez Ondina, Johnson, Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*,182.

[8] "World Christian Database." *World Christian Database*, Center for Study of Global Christianity, December 27, 2022, 12:08pm, www.worldchristiandatabase.org/.

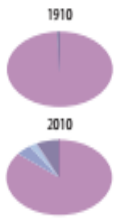
[9] Johnson, Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*,184.

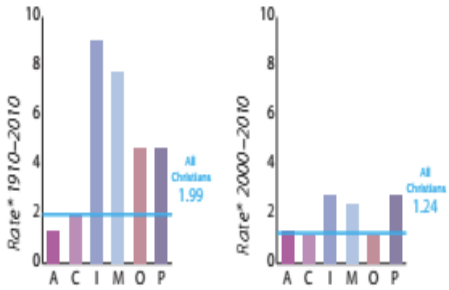
[10] "Worldometers," June 27, 2023, 11:34 am, http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/central-america-population/.

Figure 3. Major Christian Traditions in Central America, 1910 -2010, (Johnson, Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*,184.)

Major Christian traditions in Central America, 1910 & 2010

	1910	2010	Rate*	
	Adherents	Adherents	1910–2010	2000–2010
Anglican (A)	23,300	86,200	1.32	1.29
Catholic (C)	19,007,000	134,172,000	1.97	1.17
Independent (I)	1,300	7,506,000	9.05	2.79
Marginal (M)	2,100	3,834,000	7.80	2.42
Orthodox (O)	1,200	118,000	4.70	1.17
Protestant (P)	109,000	10,646,000	4.69	2.79





Before the 1900s, the primary foreign influence in Central America was Europe, but the influence shifted to the United States at the beginning of the 20th century. Gonzalez states, "USA interest in the region had already intensified with the construction and opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, and with the global economic shifts created by World War I, USA hegemony in Central America was virtually assured. That hegemony would continue throughout the twentieth century."[11]

Due to the USA's hegemony in Central America, even though most churches are no longer under North American leadership and are led by nationals, there is still a marked USA influence in these nations compared to their contemporaries in the South. Nonetheless, as Gonzales points out, Christianity has assimilated many aspects of the region's culture:

> Christianity in the region has found its voice in cultural expressions, from the visual arts to music and dance. In them all, the vitality and the reshaping of a faith influenced by Amerindian, African, and European traditions is visible, bringing a new vigour to the life of the Church… The Christian churches in Central America have been transformed from ones largely shaped by European and Northern American sensibilities to ones embracing the unique realities of the region…

[11] Gonzalez Ondina, Johnson, Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 182.

Christians have found new ways of influencing their churches and have experienced their faith in uniquely Central American ways.[12]

The following are the Christian tradition percentages for the YWAM's ACT regional area adapted from the World Christian Data Base, January 13, 2019

Table 1. Central America Christian Traditional Breakdowns by Country.

Country	**Catholics**	**Independents**	**Orthodox**	**Protestants**
Costa Rica	81.59	7.23	0.00	8.79
El Salvador	73.36	15.50	0.00	16.03
Guatemala	83.34	8.58	1.17	14.78
Honduras	73.35	5.68	0.10	13.50
Nicaragua	85.93	6.78	0.00	21.81
Panama	77.46	5.07	0.04	8.59

Financial Disparity

Economically, Central America is often seen as a mission field. This is not surprising when one considers that Central American countries host some of the lowest GDP per capita in the Americas. Central America averages 7,742 USD per capita, with Panama being the highest at 17,357 and Nicaragua the lowest at 2,255.[13] At 76,399 GDP per capita, their neighbor to the north, the USA, has a GDP per capita nearly ten times that of Central America.

[12] Gonzalez Ondina, Johnson, Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity,* 183.

[13] "GDP per Capita (Current US$) - Latin America & Caribbean," *World Bank Open Data*, accessed August 5, 2023, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=ZJ.

This in and of itself is not the complete picture. The Gini index is one measurement used to gauge inequality within a given population. "The Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality."[14] Globally, there are only 17 countries that show a Gini index of 50 or greater. Nine are in sub-Saharan Africa, and six are in Latin America. Panama has a 17,357 GDP per capita but a significant income disparity with a Gini index of 50.9. Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua are all in the upper 40s.[15]

As American missiologist Todd Johnston points out in his lecture on Global Christianity, even though the Majority Church is now in the Global South, the majority of the resources for missions reside in the North. "Christians of the Global South represent 64% of all Christians but receive only about 17% of all Christian income. This puts them at a disadvantage in many areas including health, education, communications, and overall quality of life. This imbalance is one of the great tragedies of global Christianity that could not have been easily predicted by our colleagues in Edinburgh in 1910." [16] See figure 4.

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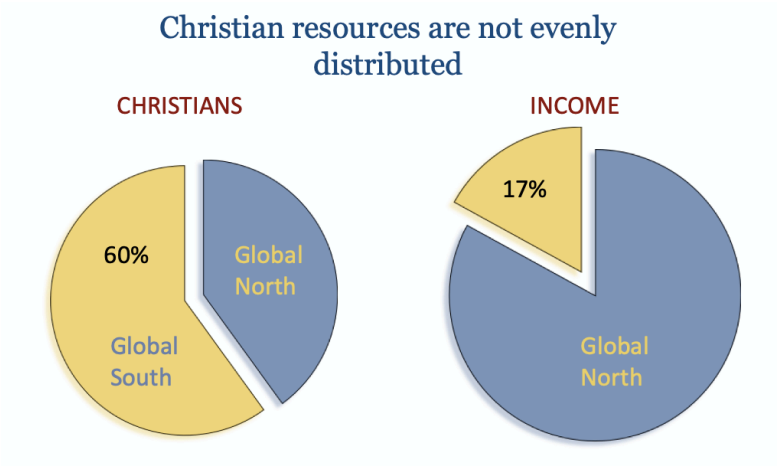
[14] "World Bank Meta Data Glossary," *World Bank*, accessed August 5, 2023, https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/gender-statistics/series/SI.POV.GINI.

[15] "Gini Index," *World Bank Open Data*, accessed August 5, 2023, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI.

[16] Todd Johnson, Navigating Global Christianity, (Brazil, September 2015).

Figure 4. Distribution of Christian Resources, (Johnson, Navigating Global Christianity, (Brazil, September 2015).



Access to Christian Higher Education

In Central America Protestant/Independent believers lack the opportunity to study in liberal arts Christian universities. There are a few Bible schools and Seminaries but no Christian liberal arts centers of higher education. The most well-known Bible schools are the *Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana* (UBL) in San José, Costa Rica, and *Seminario Teológico Centroamericano* (SETECA) in Guatemala.

Central America appears to have a great need for degree tracks in higher education and Biblical and Christ-centered liberal arts universities. Perhaps part of the reason there seems to be a disparity between the percentage of people who claim to be Christian and the lack of impact of their faith in society is that Christian principles and values have not been translated into society and, subsequently, resulted in low missionary vision. This may be partly due to the compartmentalization of faith residing primarily in the sphere of religion and not actively being practiced in the other spheres of society.

The Christian landscape has changed, but for the most part, our theology, philosophy, and strategy for the expansion of Christianity have not changed. As American missiologist Tennent states, "One of the fascinating things about observing the current geographic and cultural shift in the center of Christian gravity is that despite the dramatic growth of the Majority World church, the center of theological education and Christian scholarship remains in the Western world."[17] The Church's missiology and theology of missions must change with this shift. This begs the question of how we can see this shift occur. Is there a greater need for the Central American Church to capture the heart of God for the unreached? Speaking on having God's missionary heart, Howard Malmstadt, renowned American scientist, and co-founder of the University of the Nations shares, "…we must be moved deeply by the discrepancy, the current reality, and God's will to such an extent that we will live our lives to bring about godly change, exhibiting the good news by serving a hurting world." [18]

Although much data is available concerning the growth of Christianity in Central America and even the number of cross-cultural missionaries serving in Central America, there is very little documentation available concerning missionaries sent from Central America. Greater research is needed in this area and goes beyond the scope of this paper. This thesis-project will maintain its focus primarily within the context of YWAM and the University of the Nations in Central America.

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[17] Timothy C Tennent, *Theology In The Context Of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2009), 11.

[18] Howard V Malmstadt, David J Hamilton, and James L Halcomb, *Courageous Leaders: Transforming Their World* (Seattle, Washington: YWAM Publishing, 2000), 21.

YWAM DNA And History

When speaking of YWAM's DNA, its beliefs, values, vision, and mission, it is necessary to note that these were not formed in a vacuum from good ideas or a person's opinion. Like in scripture, they come from how God has journeyed with his people. In this case, they come from God's word and his relational journey with YWAM's founders, Loren and Darlene Cunningham, and other leaders in the mission. Throughout history, God's leadership with his people has been more relational than transactional. God establishes relational covenants with his people. With God, a covenant is not merely a contract based on rules and commitments; there is also a relational aspect. As Warren Wiersbe, an American Christian clergyman, Bible, and theology teacher states, "The Hebrew word translated "covenant" has several meanings: (1) to eat with, which suggests fellowship and agreement; (2) to bind or fetter, which means commitment; and (3) to allot, which suggests sharing. When God makes a covenant, He enters into an agreement to commit Himself to give what He promises. It is purely an act of grace."[19] In scripture, God initiates his covenants with man, and his *hesed* love covers that covenant. God pays the price even if man fails to uphold his end of the covenant. The Hebrew word *hesed* or lovingkindness is covered in greater depth in chapter two, page 24.

God works with his people in a covenantal relationship. An examination of YWAM's four key legacy words and subsequent Foundational Values is needed to create a framework and gain a better understanding of how God has journeyed with YWAM in a covenantal relationship.

[19] Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Obedient: Learning the Secret of Living by Faith: Ot Commentary, Genesis 12-25* Colorado Springs, Colorado: David C. Cook, 2010, 25.

Legacy Word #1. The Vision of the Waves.

YWAM was birthed with a vision God gave American missionary and YWAM founder Loren Cunningham in 1956. In his book *Is That Really You God,* Cunningham recounts the vision he had while on a mission trip in the Bahamas in June 1956.

> Suddenly, I was looking at a map of the world, only the map was alive and moving! I sat up and shook my head and rubbed my eyes. It was a mental movie. I could see all the continents, and waves were crashing onto their shores. Each wave went onto a continent, then receded, then came up farther until it covered the continent completely. I caught my breath. Then, as I watched, the scene began to change. The waves became young people—kids my age and even younger—covering all the continents of the globe. They were talking to people on street corners and outside bars. They were going from house to house and preaching the Gospel. Then, just as suddenly, they were gone.[20]

This vision became part of YWAM's foundational covenant and is one of four of YWAM's key legacy words. Examining the vision, YWAM co-founder Darlene Cunningham identifies two key elements that were revolutionary and unheard of at that time. "First of all, it was about youth. This was both a concrete reality, and it can also serve as a metaphor for something more. Concretely, if we ever move away from championing young people, we have moved away from the call of God upon us as the YWAM tribe."[21] YWAM was a forerunner in mobilizing youth into missions.

In the vision of the waves God showed Loren Cunningham, it was from everywhere to everywhere. As Darlene Cunningham explains, "Secondly, it was about **all** and **every**. The waves of young people covered every nation in all the continents. It is about being global,

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[20] Loren Cunningham, *Is That Really You God? Hearing The Voice of God*, 2nd ed. (Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 2001), 16.

[21] Darlene Cunningham, Dawn Gauslin, and Sean Lambert, *Values Matter: Stories of the Beliefs & Values That Shaped Youth With A Mission* (Seattle, Washington: YWAM Publishing, 2020), 274.

comprehensive, inclusive."[22] This includes Central Americans, every region, all people, and every generation. "This speaks of multi-generational reiterations of the vision that expand in fractal-like multiplication. Each wave builds on that which has gone before."[23] The waves indicate successional missionary movements from generation to generation.

Speaking of the aforementioned relational journey of God leading YWAM, it is good to look at YWAM's historical timeline. This timeline and significant events have been adapted from YWAM's official webpage.[24] While on an outreach trip to Hawaii in the summer of 1960, Cunningham developed the vision into a strategy to start a new organization that would send youth from all denominations on mission trips to gain purpose and calling. At that time, sending youth into missions was revolutionary. At that year's end, he officially established Youth With A Mission. Two years later, he married Darlene Scratch, and together, they pioneered the ministry. By 1966, the ministry had grown to ten full-time staff, and hundreds were mobilized into short-term missions.

In 1969, the first training program, the School of Evangelism, was established, with twenty-one students attending in Chateau-d'Oex, Switzerland. Soon after, in 1970, YWAM purchased a hotel and established its first permanent location in Lausanne, Switzerland. By 1972, YWAM was comprised of forty full-time staff, and in that same year, YWAM mobilized close to one thousand volunteers for outreach to the 1972 Munich Olympics. Since that first outreach, thousands of YWAM volunteers have been mobilized to Olympic outreaches. In 1974 the Discipleship Training School (DTS) was established, a twelve-week intensive lecture phase

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[22] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter,* 274.

[23] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter,* 274.

[24] "YWAM History," *Youth With A Mission*, accessed July 6, 2023, https://ywam.org/about-us/history.

focusing on biblical foundation, character development, and missions. This is followed by an eight-to-twelve-week outreach phase. The motto of the DTS and YWAM is to know God and make him known.

In 1977, YWAM established the Pacific and Asia Christian University. In 1989, the university was renamed the University of the Nations (UofN). Today, "Approximately 17,500 students a year take one or more registered courses in over 97 languages at more than 650 locations on all continents."[25] The UofN comprises the colleges of Arts, Christian Ministries, Communications, Counseling, Education, Humanities and International Studies, Science and Technology, and the International Centers.[26] The UofN courses can lead to various degrees at the Associate, Bachelor, and Master levels. UofN courses are modular intensives with a learning-by-doing and live-learn educational model. "Intensive educational programmes, which require cooperation and sharing among the participants followed by the immediate field application of principles learned." [27] The UofN is a multiplier for missions, "…each UofN course, seminar, and field assignment is intentionally designed to increase workers, resources, and ministries for the mission field… Any student who receives a degree from the UofN will have already participated in numerous mission endeavors."[28] The framework of the UofN colleges is based on YWAM's second legacy word.

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[25] University of the Nations Catalogue, (2020-2021), 11.

[26] "New to the UofN?" accessed July 6, 2023, https://uofn.edu/.

[27] University of the Nations Catalogue, (2020-2021), 11.

[28] University of the Nations Catalogue, (2020-2021), 13

Legacy Word #2. The Seven Spheres of Influence.

In 1972, Loren Cunningham received another word from God. As David Hamilton, American missionary and President of the UofN Kona Hawaii reflects, "He had been asking God for understanding on how to see a nation discipled, and God had just spoken to him about seven influential spheres of society that shape the worldview, beliefs, and values of a culture."[29] The thought came to him, "If we could simply teach the principles and practices of God's kingdom in each of these seven arenas, then we could see the transformation of our communities and nations..."[30] This concept was not only given to Loren Cunningham. "At that time, both Dr. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ and Dr. Francis Shaefer received the same word."[31] "These seven spheres exist in every society, from the most primitive stone-age tribes to the most sophisticated megacities. They include the areas of **family, economy, government, religion, education, media, and celebration.**"[32] These were seen as the basic framework of every society, and by equipping and mobilizing workers into these seven spheres of influence, nations could be discipled. Hamilton continues,

> A couple of years later, based on this new understanding, the Cunningham's together with their dear friend, Howard Malmstadt, would launch the University of the Nations. It would be a new kind of Christian university, designed to be a multiplier for missions in a digital, globalized age, eventually equipping young men and women from over 200 different countries in the ways of God. The goal of this new kind of live-learn training? To bring transformational change to nations by intentionally applying kingdom principles in each of the seven spheres of influence.[33]

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[29] David Hamilton, "YWAM's Covenantal Framework," *Catch The Wave* 2 (2013): 143.

[30] Hamilton, "YWAM's Covenantal Framework," 143.

[31] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter,* 88.

[32] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter,* 277.

[33] Hamilton, "YWAM's Covenantal Framework," 143.

This legacy word goes hand in hand with the call to go to "the all and the every" in the vision of the waves. This will be expanded later, but for now, only to point out that Central Americans are included in this legacy word of multiplication to every people group and into the seven spheres of society. The goal is to bring God's love, hope, and truth to every individual, family, community, and nation. This leads to YWAM's third legacy word.

Legacy Word #3. The Christian Magna Carta

In 1981, YWAM leaders from around the world gathered in Kona, Hawaii, for the First International Strategy Conference. Darlene Cunnigham shares, "Everyone dispersed to listen to God individually. As soon as Loren was alone, he sensed God began to speak to him. He reports, "I wrote as fast as I could on what I understood to be the Christian Magna Carta."[34] YWAM affirms the Christian Magna Carta, which believes the following basic rights are implicit in the gospel:

> Everyone on earth has the right to: Hear and understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Have a Bible available in his/her own language, Have a Christian fellowship available nearby to be able to meet for fellowship regularly each week and to have biblical teaching and worship with others in the body of Christ, Have a Christian education available for their children, Have the basic necessities of life: food, water, clothing, shelter, and health care, Lead a productive life of fulfillment spiritually, mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically.[35]

This has become a guiding document for YWAM Panama, others in Central America and around the world to bring hope to the communities, where they endeavor to incorporate each element into the outreach efforts and the discipleship of the communities they serve in. Center to

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[34] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter,* 278.

[35] Hamilton, "YWAM's Covenantal Framework," 153.

this is each individual's right to have the Bible available in their mother tongue, which points to YWAM's fourth legacy word.

Legacy Word #4: End Bible Poverty

In 1967, Loren Cunningham was leading an outreach through Mexico to Central America, and their vehicle had to stop for a tire repair. Not wanting to waste an opportunity, while the others repaired the tire, part of the team handed out New Testaments to homes in the area and held an open-air meeting. He recounts,

> After our meeting a woman in a faded red dress came up to me. My Spanish wasn't very good, but I understood her to say, 'There's no place in my town to get a Bible, and there aren't any in the towns around here. Do you have a Bible in my language?' I managed to find a Spanish Bible for her. She grasped it to her chest. *'¡Muchisimas gracias, señor!'* As we drove away, the woman's question continued to haunt me. 'Do you have a Bible in my language?' Then, a picture suddenly came before my eyes, I believe it was what the Bible calls a 'vision.' I saw a big truck, not a semi, but more like a large moving van. Painted on the side was, *'Sólo los deshonestos temen la verdad. Santa Biblia, gratis.'* I didn't know Spanish well enough to think in the language, so seeing these sentences was a complete surprise. I translated them slowly in my mind. They meant, 'Only the dishonest fear the truth. Free Bibles.' What an exciting thought! The phrase 'Only the dishonest fear the truth' was completely new to me, and it rang in my mind. It was especially pertinent at the time, as communists were spreading their cause across Latin America. As the vision continued, I saw young people standing in the back of the truck handing Bibles into eager hands as fast as they could.[36]

Ending bible poverty has become central to YWAM's call and purpose. In YWAM's End Bible Poverty Now movement, YWAM has partnered with 25 organizations to create accessible and relevant ways to read, hear, or see God's Word. The partnerships include Wycliffe Global

[36] Loren Cunningham and Janice Rogers, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country* (Seattle, Washington: YWAM Publishing, 2007), 185.

Alliance, SIL, The Seed Company, Jesus Film Project, Faith Comes by Hearing, and others. [37] American missionary journalist outlines the goals of ending Bible poverty, "End Bible Poverty Now has emphasized six priorities: prayer, translation, publication, distribution, education, and motivation, which leads to engagement." [38]

An exciting area in ending bible poverty is in Oral Bible Translation (OBT). One is not able to talk about ending bible poverty without mentioning oral bible translation and the impact it is having. OBT originated from bible storying. Today, it is central to get the scriptures into living mother tongue languages. Here is the definition of OBT given by "End Bible Poverty Now," a partnership comprised of twenty-five mission and Bible translation organizations:

> Oral Bible translation, or OBT, is an effective method for translating the Bible into languages without a written format. OBT methods reduce the time needed to see God's Word available to a people group, while affirming the value of oral cultures and the impact of God's Word on His people. OBT matches a native speaker with a facilitator who speaks a common language. Together they work through translating the Bible into an oral format. Simply put, Oral Bible Translation is an effective, practical, and impactful way to translate the Bible into the remaining 1000+ languages.[39]

There are numerous possibilities to see Central Americans trained and mobilized into bible distribution, engagement, and OBT projects at home and abroad.

Foundational Values

As with the four YWAM legacy words, the eighteen Foundational Values came from a place of corporate relationship with God. These give additional framework to the calling and

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[37] "Oral Bible Translation," *End Bible Poverty Now*, accessed July 25, 2023, https://endbiblepovertynow.com.

[38] Jim Killam, "'YWAM Has People' ... and a Big Vision," *Wycliffe Global Alliance*, accessed July 25, 2023, https://www.wycliffe.net/ywam-has-people-and-a-big-vision/.

[39] https://endbiblepovertynow.com/translation/

purpose of YWAM. They are taken from YWAM.org and listed here. Several of these values will be referenced throughout this paper.

1. **Know God.** YWAM is committed to know God, His nature, His character, and His ways. We seek to reflect who He is in every aspect of our lives and ministry. The automatic overflow of knowing and enjoying fellowship with God is a desire to share Him with others.
2. **Make God known.** YWAM is called to make God known throughout the whole world, and into every arena of society through evangelism, training, and mercy ministries. We believe that salvation of souls should result in transformation of societies, thus obeying Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations.
3. **Hear God's voice.** YWAM is committed to creating with God through listening to Him, praying His prayers and obeying His commands in matters great and small. We are dependent upon hearing His voice as individuals, together in team contexts and in larger corporate gatherings as an integral part of our process for decision making.
4. **Practice worship and intercessory prayer.** YWAM is dedicated to worship Jesus and engage in intercessory prayer as integral aspects of daily life. We also recognize the intent of Satan to destroy the work of God and we call upon God's power and the Holy Spirit to overcome his strategies in the lives of individuals and in the affairs of nations.
5. **Be visionary.** YWAM is called to be visionary, continually receiving, nurturing, and releasing fresh vision from God. We support the pioneering of new ministries and methods, always willing to be radical in order to be relevant to every generation, people group, and sphere of society. We believe that the apostolic call of YWAM requires the integration of spiritual eldership, freedom in the Spirit and relationship, centered on the Word of God.
6. **Champion young people.** YWAM is called to champion youth. We believe God has gifted and called young people to spearhead vision and ministry. We are committed to value them, trust them, train them, support them, make space for them, and release them. They are not only the Church of the future; they are the Church of today. We commit to follow where they lead, in the will of God.
7. **Be broad-structured and decentralized.** YWAM is broad-structured and diverse, yet integrated. We are a global family of ministries held together by shared purpose, vision, values, and relationship. We believe that structures should serve the people and the purposes of God. Every ministry at every level has the privilege and responsibility of accountability to a circle of elders.
8. **Be international and interdenominational.** YWAM is international and interdenominational in its global scope as well as its local constituency. We believe that ethnic, linguistic, and denominational diversity, along with redeemed aspects of culture, are positive factors that contribute to the health and growth of the mission.

9. **Have a biblical Christian worldview.** YWAM is called to a biblical Christian worldview. We believe that the Bible makes a clear division between good and evil; right and wrong. The practical dimensions of life are no less spiritual than the ministry expressions. Everything done in obedience to God is spiritual. We seek to honor God with all that we do, equipping and mobilizing men and women of God to take roles of service and influence in every arena of society.
10. **Function in teams.** YWAM is called to function in teams in all aspects of ministry and leadership. We believe that a combination of complementary gifts, callings, perspectives, ministries, and generations working together in unity at all levels of our mission provides wisdom and safety. Seeking God's will and making decisions in a team context allows accountability and contributes to greater relationship, motivation, responsibility, and ownership of the vision.
11. **Exhibit servant leadership.** YWAM is called to servant leadership as a lifestyle, rather than a leadership hierarchy. A servant leader is one who honors the gifts and callings of those under his/her care and guards their rights and privileges. Just as Jesus served His disciples, we stress the importance of those with leadership responsibilities serving those whom they lead.
12. **Do first, then teach.** YWAM is committed to doing first, then teaching. We believe that firsthand experience gives authority to our words. Godly character and a call from God are more important than an individual's gifts, abilities, and expertise.
13. **Be relationship oriented.** YWAM is dedicated to being relationship- oriented in our living and working together. We desire to be united through lives of holiness, mutual support, transparency, humility, and open communication, rather than a dependence on structures or rules.
14. **Value the individual.** YWAM is called to value each individual. We believe in equal opportunity and justice for all. Created in the image of God, people of all nationalities, ages and functions have distinctive contributions and callings. We are committed to honoring God-given leadership and ministry gifts in both men and women.
15. **Value families.** YWAM affirms the importance of families serving God together in missions, not just the father and/or mother. We encourage the development of strong and healthy family units, with each member sharing the call to missions and contributing their gifts in unique and complementary ways.
16. **Practice dependence on God.** YWAM is called to practice a life of dependence upon God for financial provision. For individuals and YWAM corporately this comes primarily through His people. As God has been generous toward us, so we desire to be generous. YWAMers give themselves, their time, and talents to God through the mission with no expectation of remuneration.
17. **Practice hospitality.** YWAM affirms the ministry of hospitality as an expression of God's character and the value of people. We believe it is important to open our hearts, homes, and campuses to serve and honor one

another, our guests and the poor and needy, not as acts of social protocol, but as expressions of generosity.

18. **Communicate with integrity.** YWAM affirms that everything exists because God communicates. Therefore, YWAM is committed to truthful, accurate, timely and relevant communication. We believe good communication is essential for strong relationships, healthy families and communities, and effective ministry.[40]

By examining YWAM's beliefs, values, and four legacy words, it is easy to see that Central Americans are included in the vision, calling, and multicultural legacy of YWAM. Each YWAM campus in Central America offers UofN courses, and many Central American missionary candidates have completed YWAM's introductory course to missions, the Discipleship Training School (DTS). The DTS is YWAM's doorway into missions. The DTS is a five to six-month program blending classroom learning, small group activities, personal reflection, practical service, and community living. It comprises a three-month lecture phase, followed by a two to three-month field assignment that allows the students to discover their passions and their part in God's purposes for the world.[41]

The earliest YWAM work in Central America was established in Guatemala in 1983, with their first DTS in 1986. From there, YWAM was launched in Nicaragua in 1989. Nicaragua's first DTS was in 1993, and all the students were Latinos. Soon after, YWAM was established in 1990 in both Costa Rica and Honduras. YWAM Panama was founded in 1993, and YWAM El Salvador was established in 2002.

Currently, YWAM has three bases of operation in Guatemala, two in El Salvador, two in Honduras, three in Nicaragua, five in Costa Rica, and three in Panama. Out of those trained,

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[40] "The Statement of Purpose, Core Beliefs and Foundational Values of YWAM," *Youth With A Mission*, accessed August 21, 2023, https://ywam.org/about-us/values.

[41] "Discipleship Training School (YWAM DTS)," *Youth With A Mission*, accessed February 6, 2024, https://ywam.org/dts.

there seem to be only a few Central Americans that go on to further training with the UofN, and only a small percentage of graduates that continue with YWAM in full-time service for more than two years. There has been an excellent multiplication of YWAM operating locations in the region, but research on the fruitfulness and multiplication of Central Americans serving in the mission is needed.

Additionally, in the twenty-eight years of missionary work and training missionaries in Panama and Central America, I have had many conversations with young adults who have a missionary call but have abandoned their call. Although anecdotal, the reasons often cited are that my family does not want me to go, I will never be able to raise the support needed, or my pastor will not bless and send me into the field. These experiences and conversations are catalysts for this research and the questions being asked.

Conclusion

It is clear that the mobilization of Central Americans into global missions fits squarely into YWAM's vision, purpose, calling, legacy words, and values. YWAM has a significant presence in the region, and as the research will show, there is fruit, but more needs to be done. This thesis-project endeavors to identify the challenges, obstacles, and hurdles limiting Central Americans from entering missionary service with YWAM and to discover possible solutions to overcome these obstacles. As Jesus lamented to the disciples of old, his plea goes out to the Central American Church today.

2 Chronicles 16:9 states, "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him."[42] What is God's heart for Central

[42] Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employ the *New International Version*.

Americans? Malmstadt asserts, "As we get to know Him, our gaze follows His gaze. We allow His Concerns to become ours. Because He is concerned about the state of affairs of the world, we to become concerned."[43] It is God's heart to see Central Americans championed, trained, and mobilized into Global missions. "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). Does this passage only apply to lost souls of Israel, or can it also give a glimpse into God's heart and desire to see a wave of missionaries mobilized out of Central America? "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matt. 9:37-38).

[43] Howard V Malmstadt, David J Hamilton, and James L Halcomb, *Courageous Leaders: Transforming Their World* (Seattle, Washington: YWAM Publishing, 2000), 19.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Considering God and the Theology of Mission

One cannot talk about missions, the task at hand, or how to accomplish this task without considering God. The purpose of this chapter is not to give an exhaustive theological and Biblical treatise on the fall of man and the beliefs and doctrines concerning salvation in Jesus Christ but rather to provide an overview of God's missional heart in the context of the problem this thesis-project endeavors to solve.

By examining the theology of mission from the scriptures, this chapter will address the following: What is missions? What is God's missional plan? The theology of work and vocation in missions. Faith-filled volunteerism. Who are called to missions?

The Biblical record from Genesis to Revelation is a testimony of God's missional heart for his creation. The Trinity was present from the very beginning. The Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters. The triune God made man and woman in his image and likeness. Man's sin interrupts God's mission, but this does not thwart the creation mandate given to man, "…to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth…" (Gen 1:28 NASB) The Father continues with his plan, making a covenant with Abraham:

> The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Gen 12:1-3).

From Abraham's seed through the nations of Israel, God brings forth salvation and restoration of what was lost through his Son, God incarnate. "The promises were spoken to

Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ." (Gal 3:16). There are many implications of the incarnation in missionary endeavors today. For now, to simply say that God became man so he could take back what the first man by free will gave away. This is crucial. By Adam's sin, man relinquished his authority to Satan, and it was only a sinless man who could take that authority back. Jesus was able to defeat Satan, not because he was God, but because he was a man without sin. He was fully human. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin." (Heb 4:15).

The prime motivator of God's mission in Hebrew is his *hesed*. What is *hesed*? Lian Duguid, a British Biblical scholar, writes, "...the exact English equivalent has proved hard for Bible translators to render it accurately. In various versions, it appears as kindness, faithfulness, mercy, goodness, loyalty and steadfast love."[1] In Exodus 34:6-7 when God passes in front of Moses, he describes his character. "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin…" Duguid, states, "Having entered a covenant relationship with His people, God bound Himself to act toward them in certain ways, and He is utterly faithful to His self-commitment." Jesus exudes *hesed*. Duguid continues, "The fullness of the Lord's hesed is seen in the cross: there the true hesed, Jesus Christ Himself—the only human ever truly to be loyal to the Lord and to His neighbor in every aspect of life… The Lord's hesed will never let us go." It is at the center of his mission. Unrolling and reading from

[1] Iain Duguid, "Loyal-Love (Hesed)," *Ligonier Ministries*, accessed March 5, 2024, https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/loyal-love-hesed.

the scroll of the prophet Isaiah in the temple, Jesus proclaims, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4: 18-19). His purpose was, "…to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10). He has delegated his mission to the Church. In the scriptures, God reveals his heart, plans, strategies, training, and mobilization models for the redemption of his creation.

What Is Missions?

There is some discussion on the differences between mission and missions. Although mission and missions can have similar meanings, when using mission, the reference is more commonly speaking in the broader sense, or overarching mission of God and his people, whereas the word missions tends to describe the activities of God's people carrying out his mission.

With this in mind, the church needs to remember that the missionary task is, first and foremost, God's. South African missiologist David Bosch echoes this sentiment. "During the past half a century or so there has been a subtle but nevertheless decisive shift toward understanding mission as God's mission."[2] He goes on to say, "In attempting to flesh out the *missio Dei* concept, the following could be said: In the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God."[3] R. Paul Stevens, Canadian professor emeritus of marketplace theology and leadership at Regent College observes, "Evangelicals have been in the forefront of

[2] David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 398.

[3] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 400.

refining a theology of mission. Mission has been reframed from something the church does to bring the gospel to the world in response to the Great Commission, to something God is doing to bring God's shalom into the world – "as the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21 NIV)."[4]

Missions is not God's backup plan; it is and has always been, his plan. One sees from Genesis to Revelation God's clarion call to missions. It is his plan to work through his people. In Genesis, when God gives the creation mandate to Adam and Eve, it is his mission mandate to mankind. "…Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Genesis 1:28).

This is a call to multiply God's shalom relationship with his creation, humankind, and all of life. As American sociologist Hunter puts it, "To be Christian is to be obliged to engage the world, pursuing God's restorative purposes over all of life, individual and corporate, public, and private. This is the mandate of creation."[5] Before a sin was ever committed, before man's disobedience brought a curse upon all creation, God's mandate to Adam and Eve was to be fruitful and multiply. This is to multiply the beauty, order, and abundance found in the garden throughout the earth. Jesus passes this mandate onto his Church.

The body of Christ does God and the Church a disfavor when they see his mission as only saving souls. As previously mentioned, first, there is the creation mandate, and then there is God raising up a nation, a people, to bring forth the Messiah, culminating in the incarnation. Jesus is Emanuel, God with us. This is God reconciling man to himself. Jesus did not reach

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[4] R. Paul Stevens, Brian Stiller et al., *Evangelicals Around the World* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2015), 178.

[5] James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

mankind from afar but dwelt among us. In the same way, he sends his people to dwell amongst the lost. It is not a message of the lost coming to the Church but of the Church taking Christ to the lost.

In the Great Commission, Jesus gives his followers two similar but distinct commands: "He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." (Mark 16:15). This is preaching the Gospel of salvation to every individual. The focus is to go preach to every person. In Matthew 28:18-20, the focus changes. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20).

In the Greek, the verb to make is not in the text. The verb is to disciple. Speaking concerning this passage, Hamilton asks? "<u>What</u> are we to do? Disciple all the nations. μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. *(matheiteusate panta ta ethnei).* It is a call to the corporate transformation of nations."[6] British historian and missiologist Andrew Walls concurs with this:

> The highly individualistic nature of contemporary Western culture has led to the interpretation of this passage as though it said, "Make some disciples in each nation." No doubt this meaning can be validly deduced, but it does not represent the meaning of the words. According to the words of the Great Commission which we have, the task of the disciples of Christ is to disciple the nations, to make the nations disciples.[7]

This lines up with British Matthew Henry's commentary of Matthew 28:19:

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[6] David Hamilton, "The Great Commission," Executive Master in Global Christianity and Pioneering" (class lecture, University of the Nations, Mazatlán, MX, October 19, 2021).

[7] Walls, Andrew Finlay. 2009. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 48.

> What is the principal intention of this commission; to *disciple* all nations. *Matheteusate*—"*Admit them disciples*; do your utmost to make the nations Christian nations;" not, "Go to the nations, and denounce the judgments of God against them, as Jonah against Nineveh, and as the other Old-Testament prophets" (though they had reason enough to expect it for their wickedness), "but go, and *disciple them*."[8]

French theologian and reformer Calvin expresses a similar sentiment, "The meaning amounts to this, that by proclaiming the gospel everywhere, they should bring *all nations* to the obedience of the faith, and next, that they should seal and ratify their doctrine by the sign of the gospel." Young's Literal translation clearly states, "…having gone, then, **disciple all the nations**, (baptizing them -- to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all, whatever I did command you,) and lo, I am with you all the days -- till the full end of the age.' (Matt. 28:18-20). Similarly, Stephen Perks, British missiologist and founder of the Kuyper Foundation states, "Because there is, strictly speaking, no single term in English that translates this Greek verb, the Authorised Version, following Tyndale and the Geneva Bible, translates the first part of the Great Commission as "Go ye therefore, and *teach* all nations."[9] Commenting on the text, American theologian Albert Barnes disagrees with the interpretation "teach all nations and proposes the correct interpretation is, "to disciple or "make disciples of."

> Teach all nations - The word rendered "teach," here, is not the one that is usually so translated in the New Testament. This word properly means "to disciple, or to make disciples of." This was to be done, however, by teaching, and by administering baptism. All nations - This gracious commission was the foundation of their authority to go to the Gentiles. The Jews had expected that the offers of life under the Messiah would be confined to their own nation. Jesus

[8] Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017).

[9] Stephen C. Perks, *The Great Decommission* (Taunton, England: Kuyper Foundation, 2011), 8.

> broke down the partition wall, and commissioned his disciples to go everywhere, and bring the "world" to the knowledge of himself.[10]

Each of these translations and commentaries begin with the assertion that once Jesus' followers receive power from on high, they will go disciple or teach nations. They are commissioned to do this by baptizing "them:" The verb here is "baptize," and the object of the verb is "them." In the sentence structure, the word "them" refers to nations. How is a nation discipled? This is done by baptizing the nation. The Greek word βαπτίζοντες (baptizo) is used here, which carries the idea to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge, to bathe, or to overwhelm (βαπτίζω G907).

When asking how a nation is discipled, referring to God's Word, Walls states:

> Let us now apply this understanding of discipleship to the task of making disciples of all nations. It is clear that more is implied than simply making the Master's word known to all peoples. That Word is to pass into all those distinctive ways of thought, those networks of kinship, those special ways of doing things, that give the nation its commonality, its coherence, its identity.[11]

What does he mean by the Word passing into all the distinctive ways of thought, networks, and ways of doing things? How does this happen? Hamilton explains it this way, "To disciple means to shape, fashion, mold, teach, coach, model, instruct, train, mentor, educate, transform. How long does it take to disciple? To do it right requires years of intentional effort."[12] In other words, if these interpretations are correct, this is done by teaching them (nations) to observe and obey all that Jesus (the Word) has commanded.

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[10] Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1990).

[11] Walls, *The Missionary Movement,* 50.

[12] Stier, Jim, Richlyn Poor, Lisa Orvis, and David Hamilton. 2008. *His Kingdom Come: An Integrated Approach to Discipling the Nations and Fulfilling the Great Commission*. (Seattle, WA: YWAM Pub), 50.

Mark 16:15 is quantitative; preach the Gospel to everyone. Matthew 28:19-20 is qualitative; disciple all nations. Landa Cope an American missionary and founding International Dean of the College of Communication for Youth With A Mission's University of the Nations states "… we can look at the work of the church in two dimensions: the breadth (the quantitative task of reaching every creature) and the depth (the qualitative task of blessing and discipling all nations)."[13] She shows how, over the past two centuries, the Church has understood the breadth but has neglected the depth of missions. In Acts chapters one and two, one can see God equipping his disciples, the church, to be a witness to the nations by sending the third person of the Trinity. "…you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8). There is then the outpowering of the Spirit in Acts 2, and these scared, weak disciples are transformed into bold ambassadors of the Gospel. In the story, despite having to confront external and sometimes internal opposition, the New Testament church multiplies rapidly, and God's missional mandate advances. This culminates when God gives his people a glimpse into the future, where Satan and evil governments are defeated by the Lamb, with the overcoming Church and nations worshiping and serving with him in a new heaven and a new earth. "I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. **The nations will walk by its light,** and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. (Rev. 21:22-24 emphasis added).

> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. **And the leaves of the tree are for**

[13] Landa Cope, *An Introduction to The Old Testament Template* (Burtigny, Switzerland: The Template Institute Press, 2006), 28.

> **the healing of the nations.** No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, **and his servants will serve him.** (Rev. 22:1-4 emphasis added).

God's mission starts in a garden and ends in a city, but two things remain the same. One, it is his mission to heal the nations. Two, he has chosen to co-labor with and carry out his mission through his people. This is his plan throughout the Biblical narrative.

God's Missional Plan

Part of the problem seems to be a lack of understanding God's missional plan. Often, the Church has reduced missions into a department, event, or something that only a special few participate in. It is his mission, but it must be manifest within the relationships, context, time, and space his people occupy. It is his plan that his people would take the universality of who he is and apply it to the particular of where he has placed or sent them. English Anglican scholar in theology Richard Bauckham gives an example of this with Israel. "We find the universal God in his particularity as the God of Israel."[14] He continues, "Mission takes place on the way from the particularity of God's action in the story of Jesus to the universal coming of God's kingdom. It happens as particular people called by God go from here to there and live for God here and there for the sake of all people."[15] He adds, "If we look more closely at the movement of the biblical narrative from the particular to the universal we can see that it has three aspects or three dimensions: the temporal, the spatial and the social."[16] This goes in both directions, "The

[14] Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission Christian Witness in a Postmodern World Easneye Lectures Frumentius Lectures,* (Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 2003 and Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 10.

[15] Bauckham, *Bible and Mission,* 10.

[16] Bauckham, *Bible and Mission,* 13.

movement of the biblical narrative thus moves from the particular to the universal in all three dimensions of time, space and human sociality.[17]

God's plan is for the whole body of Christ to take his truth to the whole world in their respective spheres of influence. In other words, we are Christ's ambassadors. "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor. 5:20-21). This is individual Christians or the corporate expression of Christ body in the "particular" in their generation and culture representing and propagating the "universal" of who God is and his mission.

The book of Deuteronomy is a template of universal truth that reveals God's missional intentions for society. Cope challenges the reader to study the scriptures to see, "…what the Bible has to say about all of life, including government, family, the arts, education, science, communication, economics, and the church."[18] God's intention is that the Christian faith would influence the believers thinking in every, aspect of vocation and life. Cope expounds on reducing the gospel to salvation alone:

> In reducing the gospel to salvation alone, we had also reduced our revelation of God to Savior alone. Indeed, he is our Savior. This is a wonderful revelation, essential to entering the gates of his kingdom. However, we have lost the revelation of the King of Kings, the Lord of justice; of Jehovah Jireh, Lord of economics; of the Father, Lord of the family; of the creator God, Lord of science and technology; of the living Word, Lord of communication; of the Potter, Lord of the arts and beauty; and of the great Teacher, Lord of education. We use these names and worship with these images, but we no longer understand the supremacy of Christ in each of these domains and vocations.[19]

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[17] Bauckham, *Bible and Mission,* 15.

[18] Cope, *An Introduction to The Old Testament Template*, 13.

[19] Cope, *An Introduction to The Old Testament Template*, 41.

This narrow view of the Gospel goes in contrast to Christ's declaration and response concerning Peter's revelation when Jesus asked his disciples who he was in Matthew 16:15-19.

> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hade will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

This was a declaration of divine authority given to the Church in Christ to impact their families, communities, and the world around them. Speaking of many Christians' lack of understanding concerning their role in society, Cope states, "We huddle in the foyer of God's great mansion and try to define ourselves there because our lives have less and less to do with the outside world. Is it any wonder, then, that we fixate on experiences and feelings, seeking refuge from the world we live in rather than engaging it?"[20]

So, what can, and should Christians do? How do Christians engage in the societal spheres? Hunter, referring to the "Great Commission," states, "It is the task of "making disciples," of being conformed to the image of Christ."[21] How is this done? Jesus gives clarity to this question in Matthew 28:20, "…teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." This is teaching all that Jesus commanded not only pertains to the salvation of souls but to every aspect of life and community.

The command ends with the promise that his presence goes with the believer wherever he goes. As Hunter states, "Making disciples or formation, then, requires intentionality, and it entails the hard work of teaching, training, and cautioning believers with wisdom in the ways of

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[20] Cope, *An Introduction to The Old Testament Template,* 42.

[21] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 226.

Christ so that they are fit for any calling and any service to him."[22] God's presence is not just a mystical force or aura that surrounds the believer; it manifests through the intentional, tangible acts of his people doing life together in the community and engaging with others.

Hunter calls this intentionality by the Christian community "The Enactments of Shalom," which he describes as a vision of shalom expressed and lived out by the Christian community in society. [23] This goes back to the creation mandate in to be fruitful and multiply that which was in the garden. Not only in populating the earth but in multiplying the beauty, order, and abundance found in the garden. The garden was a vision of what was to be multiplied. As Hunter describes it, "It is a vision of order and harmony, fruitfulness and abundance, wholeness, beauty, joy, and well-being. For the Christian, this was God's intention in creation, and it is his promise for the new heaven and the new earth."[24] This is done as the author explains as the "Faithful Presence Within."[25] He describes this faithful presence in two parts: "The first is that incarnation is the only adequate reply to the challenges of dissolution; the erosion of trust between word and world and the problems that attend it. From this follows the second: it is the way the Word became incarnate in Jesus Christ and the purposes to which the incarnation was directed that are the only adequate reply to challenge of difference."[26]

In other words, as image bearers of God, it is the incarnate Living Word, the presence of God in the believer, that goes with the believer and shines through the believer in whatever they

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[22] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 227.

[23] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 227.

[24] Hunter, *To Change the World,* 228.

[25] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 237.

[26] Hunter, *To Change the World,* 241.

do. This will be most effective as Christ followers, to intentionally seek his presence and identify and walk out his presence in all aspects of life. Hunter expresses it this way: "Only by being fully present to God as a worshipping community and as adoring followers can we be faithfully present in the world."[27]

It is God's desire that faith and a kingdom of heaven missional mindset be passed on from generation to generation. Speaking of the sphere of the family, Deuteronomy 6:1-3 says, "These are the commands, decrees, and regulations that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you. You must obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy, and you and your children and grandchildren must fear the Lord your God as long as you live. If you obey all his decrees and commands, you will enjoy a long life."

This is not missions as an activity or a special vocation of a few, this is life. It not only applies to child raising, but he also calls his people to live, demonstrate, and talk about his kingdom principles in all that we do. As God was giving Moses and the people of Israel the template for how to form a society, his intention was to establish a multigenerational covenant. We find an example of this when we look at the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a legacy of three generations. Sadly, this legacy ends with Joseph.

Before sending destruction to Sodom, Speaking of Abraham, God declares something very telling:

> Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." (Gen.18:17-19)

[27] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 244.

This prophecy speaks to his followers concerning, first, his desire to be in relationship with and work through his people. He could do it alone but has decided to work through men and women committed to him. Second, it points to man's participation and responsibility. Abraham has been singled out to direct not only his sons but also their families, to keep the way of the Lord, and to do what is both right and just. God commissions Abraham, as the patriarch of his family, to teach his children, their spouses, and his grandchildren his ways and principles. Being singled out to direct indicates intentionality on the part of Abraham to carry out this high calling to pass God's values and truth on to generations that would follow him.

God prophetically declares through King David, "Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power. I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles. Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue; I will proclaim your greatness. Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about your righteousness."(Psalms 145:4-7) Note, David says, that God's awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue.

In the New Testament, we find that Jesus' mission was to take back that which the first man lost through disobedience. In a Nazareth Synagogue, Jesus unrolled the scroll of Isaiah, read from chapter 61, and declared his mission. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19). His mission is permeated with *hesed,* a heart of love and compassion for the least and forgotten. This is emphasized in Luke 19:10. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." It is marked by evangelism, discipleship, and acts of compassion. Jesus imparts this mandate to his disciples when, in the Gospel of John, he declares,

"You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other." (John 15:16-17).

As stated earlier, he clarifies these sphere-based ideas in his departing words to his disciples in the Great Commission. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. "having gone, then, **disciple all the nations**, (baptizing them -- to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all, whatever I did command you,) and lo, I am with you all the days -- till the full end of the age.' (Matt. 28:18-20 YLT emphasis added).

He calls his disciples to disciple all nations and to baptize them with the presence of the triune God. The word nation here is the word *ethnē* in Greek, defined by Strong's as a race, people, or nation distinct from Israel.[28] He further commands his disciples to teach everything that he commanded. Nations are discipled by taking God's commands, his truth, and his *hesed* into every sphere of society. What qualifies his disciples to do this incredible task? He promises that his very presence will be with them always. Yes, training, skills, and knowledge are needed, but the underlying platform of the Church's authority to disciple nations is the *hesed* presence of God with his people. This is what qualified biblical heroes like Moses, Gedeon, David, Jeremiah, the disciples, and many others. It is what qualifies his ambassadors today.

[28] James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of The Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), G1484.

Theology of Work and Vocation in Missions

Why talk about work and vocation? If the church is going to fulfill the call to disciple nations, then there needs to be a deconstruction of the sacred secular divide often present in society and the church. Amy Sherman, an American scholar of religion and sociology, states, "False ideas about work emerge not just from the secular culture but also from poor theology. Therefore, church leaders must guard zealously against sacred/secular dualism that can produce an exaltation of the soul over the body (and thus of the so-called spiritual over the material) and/or a hierarchy favoring the work of clergy over that of the laity."[29]

The Western or traditional model of missionaries being sent out and financially supported by the local church limits access to many of the world's unreached people. One needs to ask, is it the only strategy and biblical model to send and maintain missionaries on the field? What do the scriptures say and reveal to us concerning this?

As stated earlier, the mission is God's, and God is our example. In Genesis chapter one, we see that God worked. He created the heavens, the earth, and all living things on the earth. "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from **all his work.** (Gen. 2:1-2, emphasis added) The Hebrew word for work used in this passage is *avodah*. Depending on the context, *avodah* is translated to work, service, or worship. "Six days you shall **labor** *(avodah),* but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest." (Exodus 34:21) "Then people go out to their **work** *(avodah),* to their labor until evening." (Psalms 104:23) "…as for me and my household, we will **serve** *(avodah)*

[29] Sherman, Amy L. 2011. *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 105.

the Lord." (Exodus 24:15) "…This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so that they may **worship** *(avodah)* me." (Exodus 8:1) The wait of this substantial when considering, the noun (H5656 *avodah*), occurs 141 times, [30] The root verb (H5647 *avad*) occurs 290 times.[31]

It is no surprise, since man is made in the likeness and image of God that he commissions man to work as well:

> Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." **27**So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. **28** God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Gen. 1:26-28).

"The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." (Gen. 2:15). The work mandate was given before the fall and before there was ever a sin. While teaching on work over the years in various YWAM training schools, when the class is asked to give their thoughts on work, a common reply is that work was part of the fall or that work is a curse. The students are often surprised that God created work. Because of a lack of understanding in this area, many have seen work as part of the fall and not part of God's original intention for man.

Chairman of the Institute for Marketplace Transformation, R. Paul Stevens, speaking on an unbiblical vocational hierarchy, declares:

> …Protestants have their own hierarchies: the cross-cultural missionary at the top, followed by parish priests and pastors, then youth workers and parachurch ministers (including seminary professors). Below the clergy-lay divide (and in descending order of religious value) are people-helping professionals (e.g.

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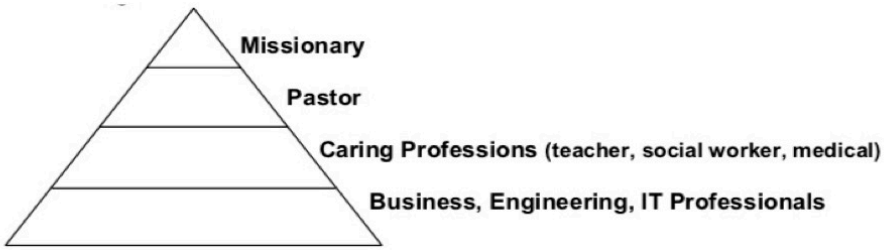
[30] James Strong, "H5656 - ʿăḇōḏâ - Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (KJV)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed August 22, 2023, https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5656/kjv/wlc/0-1/.

[31] James Strong, "H5647 - ʿāḇaḏ - Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (KJV)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed August 22, 2023, https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h5647/kjv/wlc/0-1/.

> teachers, doctors, and nurses), homemakers, tradespeople, business people, politicians and marginally valuable occupations (such as law and stock brokering). Should such distinctions be eliminated?[32]

A pyramidal graph depicting this would thus have missionaries at the top and business, engineering, and other technical professionals at the bottom. See Figure 5.

Figure 5. Pyramidal Graph of Perceived Protestant Vocational Hierarchy, (Mat Tunehag, Wayne McGee and Josie Plummer, "Business as Missions", *Lausanne Occasional Paper*, no. 59 2005, 29.)



One needs to go back and examine what God created. God did not create a sacred-secular divide. This is an invention of man. Part of the challenge when discussing work or vocation in missions is that Christians see the work part of the activity as less spiritual. This could not be further from the truth. Spirituality should not be confined to the four walls of the church or Sunday morning. In the West, church attendance is declining at an unprecedented rate. In the United States alone, as American Jeffrey Jones, Gallup Senior Editor states, "…Americans' membership in houses of worship continued to decline…, dropping below 50% for the first time in Gallup's eight-decade trend. In 2020, 47% of Americans said they belonged to a church,

[32] R. Paul Stevens, *The Other Six Days* Grand Rapids, (Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 26.

synagogue or mosque, down from 50% in 2018 and 70% in 1999."[33] In many parts of the world, these halls of religion and spirituality are no more than monuments or museums. Perhaps a better understanding of spirituality encompassing all areas of life would revitalize the body of Christ and attract this generation.

The Church's mandate is not a commission to come but to go. The scriptures command us, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." (Col. 3:23-24). Until the church gets a revelation of *Coram Deo* that everything we do should be done unto and before the face of God, they will continue to have a short-sighted Gospel unable to reach the majority of people on earth.

If a person examines the scriptures, they will find that most Old Testament heroes were not part of the Levitical order in God's structure. This includes people like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose primary vocation was in the sphere of agriculture. Joseph had a unique missional career path as a slave, prisoner, and lead governmental administrator. Moses was involved in the areas of agriculture, judicial, and government. Esther was the queen of a foreign leader, and Deborah was a Judge and military operations expert. David's vocations were a unique combination of agriculture, musician, military, and then government as king. Josiah was a boy king and societal reformer. Nehemiah was the equivalent to the secret service for the king and later a community organizer and city planner. These are just a few amongst many.

The Apostle Paul is an excellent example of this in the New Testament. For most of his missionary career, he supported himself and others with his tentmaking business. In today's

[33] Jeffrey M. Jones, "U.S. Church Membership Falls below Majority for First Time," *Gallup.Com*, May 31, 2023, accessed August 21, 2023, https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx.

terminology, he would be called a Business as Missions (BAM) missionary. Missiologist Christy J. Christy stated:

> …the Scriptures say that there are two types of cross-cultural witnesses. The first are those who receive full support from churches. This is the way the Apostle Peter was supported. On the other hand, the Apostle Paul earned his own salary by making tents. Even today, cross-cultural witnesses or "missionaries" fall into these two categories. Some are funded be the contributions of fellow Christians, while others support themselves through various professions.[34]

The idea of vocation-based missions is not new. Today, there are numerous BAM initiatives, and other forms of professional-based mission movements are on the rise. The Lausanne Occasional Paper on Business as Mission, comprising more than fifty contributors from around the world, is a helpful publication concerning BAM. The report put together by the Issue Group for Business as Missions at the 2004 Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism in Pattaya, Thailand shows, "There is a wave of thousands of Christian business people from all continents who are experiencing a dynamic move of God as part of a renewed call to His kingdom work."[35] This wave is increasingly becoming more evident in this generation of YWAM missionaries as well. Speaking to God's heart and intention for business, the Lausanne Occasional Paper states, "God established the institution and practice of business as a means of fulfilling His creation mandate to steward and care for all of creation. He is releasing the power of business to aid in the task of fulfilling the great commission making disciples of all nations. God longs to be glorified through our business activities."

When examining BAM initiatives, they are often seen primarily as a way to gain access to nations and support oneself on the field. In the effort to uphold YWAM's Value 16 for YWAM

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[34] J. Christy Wilson, Jr., *Today's Tentmakers: SelfSsupport: An Alternative Model for Worldwide Witness.* (Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale House Publishers, 1979) 15.

[35] Mats Tunehag, Wayne McGee and Josie Plummer, "Business as Missions", *Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP)*, no. 59 (2005): 9.

staff's financial provision, which will be covered in the next section, gaining access to nations, has been the primary vehicle for BAM in YWAM missionary endeavors. As the Lausanne Occasional Paper states, although these can be benefits of BAM, they only give a narrow perspective on its actual impact and potential:

> Business as mission is an act of co-creation in imitation of God and hence a response to the Creation Mandate. It is Good News in itself and hence an inseparable part of the Great Commission. Kingdom building is about wealth generation and spiritual transformation. As such Business as mission should be viewed not only within the narrow church-mission-business perspective but also within the wider macro perspective of sustainable transformational development consisting of abundance, empowerment, character and service in which people break loose from the shackles of a world bound by abject poverty.[36]

American missionary John Henry, founder, and CEO of the YWAM Student Centre, in his article "Conversation on Calling," highlights a call to vocation that not only includes the sphere of religion, but other spheres of society as well. Henry identifies three progressive callings for every Christian: the call to salvation, the call to discipleship, and the call to vocation. The call to salvation is a call to reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5:18). The call to discipleship is a call to be conformed to the likeness of Christ. (Rom. 8:29). He then highlights an often-misunderstood call to vocation:

> We are called to a vocation. Vocation is our unique call of purpose, the call to serve beyond our daily tasks. Vocation is more than discipleship. Vocation is deeper and wider than career. Vocation is our very personal response to the voice of God. Vocation is our lifework, our special gift of worship, which is the sum of all our gifts, talents, and abilities to serve God's purpose in our generation (1 Cor. 3:13–15; 2 Tim. 2:5; 4:8).[37]

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[36] Tunehag, McGee, Plummer, "Business as Missions," 22.

[37] John Henry, "Conversation on Calling," in *His Kingdom Come,* ed. Jim Stier (Seattle, Washington, YWAM Publishing, 2012), 184. (emphasis added)

As Jesus followers, the call to salvation is to know the King. Additionally, many understand the call to discipleship, to be like the King, but very few understand that Jesus, the King, has called them to co-labor with him in his kingdom in a vocational calling. Most people, including many Christians, see a missional, vocational call as only for clerics, pastors, traditional missionaries, and anyone serving in the sphere of religion. It appears that a revelation amongst all of God's people concerning their vocational calling would be transformational. The church desperately needs a theology of vocation. Stevens concludes,

> We live in a post-vocational age. Without any theology of vocation we lapse into debilitating alternatives: fatalism (doing what is required by `the forces' and `the powers'); luck (which denies purposefulness in life and reduces our life to a bundle of accidents); karma (which ties performance to future rewards); nihilism (which denies that there is any good end to which the travail of history might lead); and, the most common alternative today, self-actualization (in which we invent the meaning and purpose of our lives, making us magicians). In contrast the biblical doctrine of vocation proposes that the whole of our lives finds meaning in relation to the sweet summons of a good God.[38]

Imagine every Christian intentionally walking out their vocational calling within the spheres of society. The first part of Prov 11:10 declares, "When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices." The Hebrew word for righteous is *Tsaddiqim*. Speaking on this, Timothy Keller, American pastor, preacher, theologian, and Christian apologist explains, "The righteous in the book of Proverbs are by definition those who are willing to disadvantage themselves for the community while the wicked are those who put their own economic, social, and personal needs ahead of the needs of the community."[39] Sherman expands on this.

> Because the tsaddiqim view their prosperity not as a means of self-enrichment or self-aggrandizement, but rather as a vehicle for blessing others, everyone benefits

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[38] Stevens, *The Other Six Days*, 72.

[39] Timothy J Keller, "Creation Care and Justice" (sermon, New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, January 16, 2005).

> from their success. As the tsaddiqim prosper, they steward everything—their money, vocational position and expertise, assets, resources, opportunities, education, relationships, social position, entrée and networks—for the common good, for the advancing of God's justice and shalom.[40]

Much of missions involves having access to people the missionary is endeavoring to reach. Referring to one sphere, the marketplace, R. Paul Stevens shows how this problem is naturally overcome:

> With all the complications of post-Christendom society, it is wonderfully true that – globally, in the twenty-first century the marketplace is the most strategic mission field. Why is this? Because most Evangelicals spend forty to eighty hours a week in the marketplace. That is where life's problems are shared between workers. People watch how others work and wonder what make them tick. And, most significant of all, believers have access to workplaces where no pastor or professional missionary can ever enter. Inevitably, questions of faith will arise.[41]

Faith-Filled Volunteerism

As seen in chapter one, this call to disciple nations and mobilize the *tsaddiqim* into their vocational calling into the seven societal spheres of influence is part of YWAM's DNA. However, this sometimes creates tension and misunderstanding as to who are YWAM staff.

Typically, when a person graduates from a university, they go out into a vocation and have no organizational connection to that university. It is true that while some YWAM UofN students walk out their vocational calling within society and receive their income from their career, many serve as volunteer staff with YWAM throughout the world after graduating. With this in mind, it is necessary to look closer at YWAM Foundational Value 16:

> YWAM is called to practice a life of dependence upon God for financial provision. For individuals and YWAM corporately this comes primarily through His people. As God has been generous toward us, so we desire to be generous.

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[40] Amy L. Sherman, *Kingdom Calling,* 17.

[41] R. Paul Stevens, Brian Stiller et al, *Evangelicals Around the World*, 175.

> YWAMers give themselves, their time, and talents to God through the mission with no expectation of remuneration.[42]

From this, it is understood that YWAM functions from a place of faith-filled volunteerism. This is Biblical and is the model that Jesus used with his disciples. YWAM does not pay salaries to staff. Everyone in YWAM is responsible for raising his or her own support. This support comes from God, but the vehicles of generosity are often from a relational network of local churches, family, and friends who believe in the person's call, vision, and ministry.

An example of this is found in Luke 8:1-3, where there were women who believed in their ministry and were supporting Jesus and the disciples out of their own means. In a recent discussion with a small group of leaders in which the author participated, YWAM founder Loren Cunningham, with vigor, admonished the leaders to never compromise Value 16. "In YWAM, if we ever start paying salaries to our staff, the mission will die within one generation."[43] This seems extreme, but paying salaries is transactional and a business model and would violate YWAM's call to faith-filled volunteerism. Receiving some form of financial remuneration is appropriate in the other spheres, and there are organizations God has led to take a different approach in their means of funding. These organizations need to be faithful to God's specific direction to them, but for YWAM, faith-filled volunteerism and dependence on God are core to the mission.

When considering YWAM's legacy Word Two and the UofN's goal to equip and mobilize workers into the seven spheres of influence, there appears to be a conflict when looking

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[42] "The Statement of Purpose, Core Beliefs and Foundational Values of YWAM," *Youth With A Mission*, accessed August 21, 2023, https://ywam.org/about-us/values.

[43] Loren Cunningham, "Three Warnings to YWAM Leaders," *ExecMAL Leaders Gathering* (speech presented at the ExecMAL Leaders Gathering, Kona: Hawaii, August 11, 2023).

at Value 16 on finances. How can a person be part of YWAM while simultaneously being called to the spheres? To correct this, a distinction must be made between YWAM, the organization, YWAM's mission mobilizer, the UofN, and YWAM, the movement. Value 16 applies explicitly to YWAM operating location and UofN campus staff. Those called to the spheres carry the DNA of YWAM and are connected to the greater YWAM movement but are not staff in the organization of YWAM. These are often referred to as friends of YWAM or YWAM associates.

Although they are different in specifics and application, a similar distinction was made when God set apart the tribe of Levi in Deut. 10:8-9. They were not to receive an inheritance in the land and were to depend on the tithe or generosity of others for their sustenance (Num. 18:21-26). They continued to be part of the nation and were Israelites, but they had a specific word from God concerning how they were to operate in the area of finances that was distinct from the other tribes.

Likewise, in the greater movement of YWAM, Value 16 is a specific word for YWAM staff. This distinction is not only needed for YWAM staff to align with Value 16 correctly but also to free those called to serve outside of the organization of YWAM to operate within the domain of authority and sphere they serve in. Additionally, this allows for BAM initiatives and other missional professionals to freely operate in restricted or closed nations without any legal or direct conflict of interest or overt association to the organization of YWAM.

Finally, the distinction of domains of authority reduces the likelihood of a violation of domains, with one domain usurping the authority over another. An example of usurping a domain of authority is in 1 Samuel 13:2-15, where King Saul, operating in the domain of government, unlawfully attempts to exercise authority in the sphere of religion by offering a

sacrifice that only the prophet Samuel was authorized to do. This violation resulted in God stripping the kingdom from Saul. Sin occurs when there is a usurping of a domain of authority.

Considering the above observations, these distinctions, and God's call for some YWAM missionaries to work directly in the spheres of society, there is a need to see some mechanism or structure to help them be better connected to the YWAM global community. The answer to this is beyond the scope of this project, but more contemplation and research are needed on this topic.

Who Are Called to Missions?

As stated in Chapter One, there has been a significant shift in Global Christianity, with two-thirds of the Church now in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The problem is that even though the majority church is no longer in the North, much of the organized missional activity still has its center in the North. Although there has been no change from a Biblical standpoint, there is a great realization today that missions is polycentric, from everyone to everywhere. Referring to the Edinburgh 1910. Asian missiologist Allen Yeh expresses, "In 1910, missions was "From the West to the Rest." In the twenty-first century, missions is "From Everyone to Everywhere …because, instead of being unidirectional, it is polycentric and polydirectional."[44]

Whether referring to the Creation Mandate or the Great Commission, there is no indication in scripture that the missionary task was given to one particular gender or people group; rather, it is a call to all citizens of God's kingdom:

> So, in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. **There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you**

[44] Allen L Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology* (Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 2016), 216.

> **are all one in Christ Jesus.** If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. 3:26-29 emphasis added).

Every believer has been given the ministry or reconciliation:

> Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ**, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through **Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation**: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. **And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors**, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5: 17-21 emphasis added).

The call to equip and send is not determined by ethnicity, social or economic status. It is a call to all and a call from everywhere to everywhere. "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Matthew 10:14-15).

Matthew 28 and Mark 16's Great Commission is to the global universal church. This mandate speaks of equality. It is inclusive, collaborative, and multicultural. Additionally, it includes both the authority and responsibility to go. Speaking concerning the prolific growth of the United Methodist Church in sub-Saharan Africa, African missiologist Nelson Kalombo Ngoy states:

> There have to be equal, shared power and an equal voice at the table as co-labors in mission between the global North and Majority World in the UMC. All thirteen UMC agencies and offices must be developed every- where. Then, mission will cease to operate as from Europe and the United States to the Majority World;

rather, it will be mission from everyone to everywhere. Mission must be decentralized.[45]

Walls adds the need for diversity, "The church must be diverse because humanity is diverse; it must be one because Christ is one. Christ is human and open to humanity in all its diversity; the fulness of his humanity takes in all its diverse cultural forms."[46] Speaking to the goal of the Church, American theologian John Piper concludes, "Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't."[47]

Conclusion

The Hebrew word *hesed*, reveals God's missional heart. His *hesed* is what motivates him. Missions is not only a good activity he has given to the Church, he has invited the Church to col-labor with him in his mission. When considering his mission in the fuller understanding of the Hebrew word *avodah*, with the call to reach every person and disciple every nation, the significance of the goal and expression of missions is expediential. In this broader understanding of missions, and God's missional plan with its multiple fields of application and avenues for mobilization, a path appears for every nation. It is time for a wave of Central Americans to take their place in God's Global mission. For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14).

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[45] David W Scott and Darryl W Stephens, *The Practice of Mission in Global Methodism* (New York: Rutledge, 2021).

[46] Walls, Andrew Finlay. 2007. *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books 2007), 77.

[47] Piper, John. *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker 1993), 11.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The following review of relevant literature is categorized into six themes: Global Christianity and Theology, Polycentric and Polydirectional Mission, Missions and Transformation, Global Leadership in Missions, and Latin American Advantages and Challenges. Since little is explicitly written concerning Central America, there will be a broader emphasis on the Global South and Latin America. Additionally, since this thesis-project endeavors to find answers in the context of YWAM and the University of the Nations, relevant YWAM literature will be included.

Global Christianity and Theology

The Atlas of Global Christianity, edited by American missiologists Johnson and Ross, is an excellent, thorough, comprehensive resource tracking Global Christianity from 1910 to 2010. Through vivid maps, figures, charts, and in-depth commentary, Johnson and Ross show the shift of Christianity from the Global North to the Global South. They not only examined this global shift from 1910 to 2010 but divided the world based on United Nations regions, where additional detailed analysis is given for each region. They look at demographics, the growth and decline of Christianity, significant changes in Christian traditions, and provide data concerning missionaries received in each nation. Additionally, they give expert overviews, commentary, and analysis by practitioners serving in each region. *The Atlas of Global Christianity* served this project well in

collecting accurate data about trends and the current state of Christianity in the world and Central America.

In *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology,* American missiologist Tennent shows that one of the distinct characteristics of Christianity compared to other major world faiths is its ability to be geographically and culturally translatable. "…the lifeblood of Christianity is found in its ability to translate itself across new cultural and geographic barriers and to recognize that areas that once were the mission field can, over time, become the very heart of Christian vitality, while those areas that were once at the heart can lose the faith they once espoused."[1] Whereas all other dominant religions have kept one central hub to this day and have grown out from there, Christianity has not. This shows the Christian faith is truly a Global faith and does not require adherence to one specific culture but recognizes, values, and celebrates the beauty of all peoples and cultures. God even reveals these distinctions in eternity.

> After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Rev. 7:9-10).

Although the Church is heading in a direction that most reflects the above truths, Tennent recognizes that even though the majority church is no longer in the West, we still have a great disbalance in theological education and Christian scholarship. "One of the fascinating things about observing the current geographic and cultural shift in the center of Christian gravity is that

[1] Timothy C Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, 6.

despite the dramatic growth of the Majority World church, the center of theological education and Christian scholarship remains in the Western world."[2]

His premise "…is that the theological reflections of the Majority World church need to be heard as a part of the normal course of theological study in the West."[3] In asking the question, "Whose Religion is Christianity?" In the case of Africa, Ghanaian theologian Kwame Bediako, concerning theology, agrees that there is a need for a larger intellectual framework. He ponders,

> If therefore, one will have to reckon increasingly with 'the Gospel beyond the west,' this makes it all the more important to arrive at a larger intellectual framework than post-coloniality for describing, analysing and interpreting African Christian history, life and thought…This makes the category of 'post missionary' a larger framework, in fact, since it recognises that the Christian faith in Africa is not ultimately determined by Western paradigms of interpretation.[4]

Along these lines, Tennent examines how this shift changes or should change Christian education and scholarship in theology, bibliology, anthropology, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. These observations are fascinating in the pneumatology of the Latin American church. Tennent examines "… how the newly emerging, mostly Pentecostal, and independent church in Latin America is negotiating its emergence against the backdrop of a whole history of church-state affiliations that are characteristic of Christendom."[5] British missiologist David Smith likewise identifies this shift. "The story I have been telling…relates to the emergence of theological pluralism as the direct outcome of the cross-cultural transmission of the Gospel into new cultures and languages."[6] Looking at

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[2] Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, 11.

[3] Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity,* 15.

[4] Kwame Bediako et al., *Mission in the Twenty-First Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission*, ed. Andrew F. Walls and Cathy Ross (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 115.

[5] Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, 21.

[6] David Smith, *Mission after Christendom* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 2003, 2003), 59.

indigenous cultures, Smith points to Willis Horst American Mennonite missionary to Argentina, "We no longer seek to eliminate our own or others' uniqueness, but to celebrate it and connect each to the whole. Therein lies our hope in a pluralistic world, as we look towards the future when God, according to Ephesians 1:10, will gather all things together in Christ." [7]

Tennent points out that in the study of pneumatology, "one must consider how Latin American Pentecostals are contributing to the global discourse about the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the twenty-first century."[8] The Latin American church has much to contribute in simple obedience to the voice of God. For example, in the West, one often needs to ensure they have all the training, all the finances, and all the support network before considering moving out of their comfort zone. Latins will move out in faith with the simple Word of the Lord. God says, go to such and such a place, so they do it. However, they then hit unexpected barriers. As Tennent states concerning the acknowledgment of being led by the Holy Spirit, "It is still not uncommon for missionary candidates to be rejected by certain mission boards when on the application form, they affirm the ongoing exercise of supernatural gifts in the contemporary life of the church."[9]

Tennent not only provides a window and understanding of how the richness and depth gained through God's relational interaction with Latin America has translated into the Latin American culture but also the need for Latin America's contribution to the various fields of Christian scholarship, the Global Christian community, and mission.

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[7] Horst, Willis G. 2001 *'Spirituality of the Toba/Qom Christians on the Argentine Chaco',* Missiology, XXIX/2, April. 165-184, quoted in Smith, 182.

[8] Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity,* 169.

[9] Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity,* 177-178.

South African missiologist David Bosch, in *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, plainly states his thesis:

> …the thesis of this book that the events we have been experiencing at least since World War II and the consequent crisis in Christian mission are not to be understood as merely incidental and reversible. Rather, what has unfolded in theological and missionary circles during the last decades is the result of a fundamental paradigm shift, not only in mission or theology, but in the experience and thinking of the whole world.[10]

What is this paradigm shift? The following is a graphic outline of *Transforming Mission* by Stan Nussbaum, an American missiologist and student of Bosch.

Table 2. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, (Reader's Guide to *Transforming Mission* (ASM) (Table 1, Bosch's Introduction to Transforming Mission Is Christian Mission a Thing of the Past, Orbis Books.)

Biblical Part 1, Ch. 1-4, pp. 15-178			Historical Part 2, Ch. 5-9, pp. 181-345	Today Part 3, Ch. 10-13, pp. 349-519
1. **New Testament** model(s)			5. Paradigm theory	10. Enlightenment unraveling
			6. **Eastern Orthodox** Patristic period, 100-600, Jn. 3:16	11. Church and mission in flux
			7. **Roman Catholic** Middle Ages, 600-1500, Lk. 14:23	12. **An emerging paradigm**
			8. **Protestant** (part 1) Reformation, 1500-1800, Ro. 1:16-17	
2. Matthew	3. Luke	4. Paul	9. **Protestant** (part 2) Enlightenment & modern era, 1800-2000, Mt. 28:18-20, Lk. 4:18-19	
				13. Mission in many modes

Bosch enlightens the reader with three fundamental paradigm shifts divided in his book and takes the reader on a thorough and, at times, arduous path through mission history and the

[10] David J. Bosch. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (20th Anniversary Edition) (American Society of Missiology, Orbis Books.) Kindle Edition, 4.

various paradigm shifts that have occurred. He then enters into the emerging paradigm, stating, "During the past half a century or so, there has been a subtle but nevertheless decisive shift toward understanding mission as God's mission."[11] He goes on to say, "In attempting to flesh out the *missio Dei* concept, the following could be said: In the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God."[12]

The YWAM motto is "To know God and make Him Known." Speaking concerning this, Hamilton writes, "He's inviting us afresh to focus on the basics: to strengthen our DNA to know God and to make him known."[13] It is in knowing God that we discover his heart for the lost and hurting. From the outflowing of the Trinity's love, one begins to love what he loves. This is revealed to us in the great commandment. "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matt 22:36-40

In Bosch's walk through the tension, back and forth, and various emphasis between a vertical and horizontal salvation throughout church history. The focus has teetered between individual salvation, evangelism (spiritual), or justice (social responsibility).[14] "By the 1920s "the Great Reversal" (as Timothy Smith calls it) had been completed; the evangelicals' interest in social concerns had, for all practical purposes, been obliterated."[15]

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[11] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 398.

[12] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 400.

[13] David Hamilton, "YWAM's Covenantal Framework," 56.

[14] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 400-432.

[15] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 318.

He says the church is now poised on a reversal of the "Great Reversal" and convergence of the two convictions. "In many respects, then, an important segment of evangelicalism appears poised to reverse the "Great Reversal" and embody anew a full-orbed gospel of the irrupting reign of God not only in individual lives but also in society."[16]

In understanding this, at the risk of oversimplifying Bosch, if the church understands salvation as a relationship with the Trinity, there is no tension between the two. It all comes back to God's redemption of his creation, with the jewel of that creation being mankind. The Trinity exemplifies this loving relationship between the Godhead and His creation. It is into this dynamic of love that each person is invited. A natural response is for the church to capture God's heart of redemption, which will manifest the outworking of His mission. This goes beyond evangelism as only soul-winning but is instead a complete mission to see God's love multiplied in a hurting world. The great commission may be a command to go into all the world and disciple nations, Matt. 28, but it comes from a place of relationship, not so much doing missions for God, but being on a mission with God and doing what we see him do.

Gambian missiologist Lamin Sanneh's *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity,* likewise, examines the shift of Christianity from Europe and North America to becoming the principal religion of the Global South. The opening introduction to this Oxford Series summarizes the extent and breadth of this multicultural shift.

> An impressive picture now meets our eyes: the growing numbers and the geographical scope of that growth, the cross-cultural patterns of encounter, the variety and diversity of cultures affected, the structural and antistructural nature of the changes involved, the kaleidoscope of cultures often manifested in familiar and unfamiliar variations on the canon, the wide spectrum of theological views and ecclesiastical traditions represented, the ideas of authority and styles of leadership that have been developed, the process of acute indigenization that fosters liturgical renewal, the production of new religious art, music, hymns,

[16] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 408.

> songs, and prayers—all these are part of Christianity's stunningly diverse profile.[17]

This is due in part to the translatability of the Christian faith. Agreeing with Tennent, Sanneh states, "Being a translated religion, Christian teaching was received and framed in the terms of its host culture; by feeding off the diverse cultural streams it encountered, the religion became multicultural. The local idiom became a chosen vessel."[18]

Chapter by chapter, Sanneh walks the reader through the shift that has and is occurring. In chapter one, Whither Christianity? A Study in Origin, Thought, and Action takes the reader through the advancement and shifts of Christianity from the primitive church throughout the known world at that time, the Roman Empire, and eastward into Central and East Asia. Sennah identifies the various pillars that supported and aided in advancing the expansion of the Christian faith. The pillars are The Empire, The Vernacular Pillar, The Conversion of England, Classicism, and The Pillar of Historical Intelligence.

In assessing the pillar of historical intelligibility, Sanneh elaborates, "The empire was the milieu of Christianity's formative self-image, and the religion embarked on its historic mission imbued with the values and ideas of its cosmopolitan imperial beginnings."[19] One can see the providence of God to bring His Son into the world at this precise time in history when all the correct conditions were in place. Speaking of this unified empire, Baltic German Lutheran theologian Adolf von Harnack stated,

> All these outward conditions (of which the two latter might have been previously included among the inward) brought about a great revolution in the whole of human existence under the empire, a revolution which must have been highly

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[17] Lamin O. Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations Pillars of World Christianity* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), xix.

[18] Sanneh. *Disciples of All Nations*, 26.

[19] Sanneh. *Disciples of All Nations*, 49.

> conducive to the spread of the Christian religion. The narrow world had become a wide world; the rent world had become a unity; the barbarian world had become Greek and Roman: *one* empire, *one* universal language, *one* civilization, a *common* development towards monotheism, and a *common yearning* for saviors![20]

In chapters two through eight, Sanneh continues to examine the historical pillars of world Christianity: The Christian Movement in Islamic Perspective Comparative Pillar, Old World Precedents and New World Directions Trans-Atlantic Pillar, The Yogi and the Commissar Missions and the Colonial Pillar, The Pillar of Charismatic Renewal Obstacles and Horizon, Resurgence and the New Order in West Africa Primal Pillar, Civilization and the Limits of Mission Critical Pillar and the Christian Awakening and the New China Bamboo Pillar.

What was striking is that in most literature on the subject, one would primarily get the history of Christianity in Europe and North America. Sanneh ultimately broadens this to a world perspective, not limited by a Euro-American perspective. His observations are both eye-opening and encouraging. One sees that despite the mistakes and errors made by the church in world missions, a multicultural tapestry of God's sovereign work is evident throughout the earth.

With this in mind, one sees a new wave awakening in Christianity. Where cultural identity is valued and celebrated, while at the same time, that which has divided us is fading. More and more, God is giving the Global South a voice, authority, and platform in Christianity today. In the context of Latin America, this has resulted in an unapparelled awakening and movement in the church toward world missions. Although there are ties to the North American mission family, an increasing number of mission initiatives are being birthed out of Latin America. These come from a place of a vibrant relationship with God and a desire to fulfill the

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[20] Harnack, Adolf von. *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (Harper & Row, 1972), 23.

great commission. These new Latino and Indigenous missionaries bear a remarkable freshness and flavor of their culture and experience with God.

Polycentric and Polydirectional Missions

In *Polycentric Missiology: Twenty First Century Mission from Everyone to Everywhere,* Asian missiologist Allen Yeh walks the reader on a journey of impact through five historical conferences from Edinburgh 1910 to CLADE Costa Rica 2012. He describes their primary themes, makes comparisons between the five, and identifies strengths, weaknesses, and impacts.

Edinburgh 1910 is regarded as "the Birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement."[21] British missiologist Brian Stanley identified the watchword of Edinburgh 1910 as, "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation."[22] The second is Tokyo 2010. The focus was "Making Disciples of Every People in Our Generation."[23] The third, "Edinburgh 2010 was the most ecumenical of the four centenary celebrations in 2010."[24] "The spirit of the conference was largely gracious, and the major consensus lay in the universal agreement about the *missio Dei* (the mission of God—that all mission must start from the Trinity and not from humans), as well as the emphases on social justice, prayer, and creation care. There was no need to convince people of the validity of these issues".[25] The fourth, Cape Town 2010, primary identifiable marker was evangelical partnership. "Cape Town 2010 was so large and had such a sweeping

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[21] Allen L Yeh and Allen L Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology: 21st-Century Mission from Everyone to Everywhere* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2016), 18.

[22] Brian Stanley, The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 88.

[23] Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology*, 66.

[24] Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology*, 94.

[25] Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology*, 111-112.

scope that it was difficult to narrow down any particular foci of the congress. Yet, if there was one clearly identifiable marker, it was evangelical partnership, which also happened to be the theme of the final plenary session."[26] The other three goals were "truth about the uniqueness of Christ, identification of key missiological issues and the emergence of new initiatives in mission."[27] From this was the network of friendships and alliances that emerged. In the fifth conference, CLADE V (Costa Rica 2012), "The theme was "Sigamos a Jesús en su Reino de Vida. ¡Guíanos, Santo Espíritu!" (We Follow Jesus in His Reign of Life: Guide Us, Holy Spirit!) with the stated purpose of using the Trinity as a framework:[28]

The Congress had these stated goals:

- Generate a participatory movement that engages Christians, churches, agencies, institutions, and movements in Latin America and the Caribbean with each other around the central themes.
- Promote reflection on the gospel and its significance for human beings, society, and the whole of creation.
- Contribute to the life and mission of twenty-first century churches in Latin America and the Caribbean with a growing awareness of contextual realities.
- Serve as a platform for dialogue among Christians and between churches, ministries, networks, and Christian movements in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the rest of the world.
- Foster opportunities for the Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana (FTL) to extend its service as a facilitator of evangelical reflection and a platform for Christian dialogue in Latin America and the Caribbean.[29]

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[26] Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology*, 138.

[27] Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology*, 138.

[28] Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology,* 198.

[29] Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology,* 199.

In answering his own question, why are so many conferences needed? Yeh responds, "The answer, and the book's thesis, is that all of them are needed, and together, they are the successor to Edinburgh 1910. A century ago, mission was unilateral and unidirectional. No one conference or continent does mission best. But together, each provides a valuable piece of the puzzle."[30]

Along these lines, the Latin American Mission's conference in Panama in 1916 was momentous. As American scholar John Sinclair and Costa Rican theologian and historian Arturo Piedra Solano state, "From a practical viewpoint, the Panama Congress of 1916 provided the first opportunity for Latin American Protestants to become acquainted and to launch their first strategies for cooperation in missions"[31] American missionary Debbie Wood shares, "The Latin America 2000" conference held in Panama in 1996, where over 3000 from all over Latin America attended, was considered pivotal. The theme was "A church for every people and the Gospel for every person in Latin America and the world by AD2000."[32] This goal was perhaps too ambitious, but it provided greater depth of what God was doing in Latin America.

After guiding the reader through this history, Yeh concludes, "From the West to the Rest." In the twenty-first century, missions is "From Everyone to Everywhere" (hence the subtitle of this book) because, instead of being unidirectional, it is polycentric and polydirectional.[33] Even as early as 2008, Sierra Leonean missiologist Jehu Hancile recognized

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[30] Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology*, 5.

[31] John H. Sinclair and Arturo Piedra Solano, "The Dawn of Ecumenism in Latin America: Robert E. Speer, Presbyterians, and the Panama Conference of 1916," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 77, no1, Spring 1999, (1999).

[32] Debbie Wood, "Latins Say 'Si' to World Evangelization: Latinoamerica 2000," *Mission Frontiers*, accessed September 27, 2023, https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/latins-say-sic-to-world-evangelization-latinoamerica-2000.

[33] Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology*, 216. (emphasis mine)

the emergence of this shift. "Never before has the course of missionary movement been this multidirectional, disparate, and global. The emergence of the non-Western missionary movement in conjunction with the global migratory flows represents a major turning point in the history of Christianity."[34]

Although not without needed growth, YWAM has grown towards a polycentric, polydirectional missionary movement of people of all ages going from everywhere to everywhere. In *The Fourth Wave*, author and American YWAM leader Ron Boehme concurs with much of Yeh's findings. Boehme identifies how the focus of evangelism in the past three waves of modern missions, to the coastlands, to the interiors, and to unreached people groups "…have set the stage for the current move of the Holy Spirit around the world…How the past three waves of modern missions were necessary to bring about the fourth…What types of people and nations will be involved and what the fruit of this latest wave of God's love among the nations might be."[35] Boehme explains, "The truth is this: in the fourth wave of modern missions, all nationalities will serve at the same time, being led by new participants… the typical missionary will not be a white First Worlder. He or she will be a person from Africa, Latin America, the Pacific Islands, the Middle East, or Asia. It is their day to arise and go forth!"[36]

As stated in chapter two, a frequent YWAM theme is a call to "all nations" in Matthew 28:19 and "every creature" in Mark 16:15. Structurally, YWAM has flattened and decentralized the mission, which has allowed more organic growth at the national and local levels. This concurs with YWAM's legacy word of the waves in founder Loren Cunningham's vision that

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[34] Jehu J. Hanciles et al., *Mission in the Twenty-First Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission*, ed. Andrew F. Walls and Cathy Ross (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 129.

[35] Ron Boehme, *The Fourth Wave: Taking Your Place in the New Era of Missions* (Seattle, WA: YWAM Pub., 2011). 16.

[36] Boehme, *The Fourth Wave,* 138.

birthed the mission. As, American YWAM co-founder Darlene Cunningham, recounts, "He shared a vision God had given to him of waves crashing onto the shores of the world. As he watched, the waves became young people, coming from everywhere and going to everywhere with the Gospel, covering every continent. Because of that vision, he had started a movement called Youth With A Mission."[37] Today, YWAM is seeing the fruit of this vision. "YWAM is growing fastest in what used to be considered missionary-receiving nations. There is a global acceleration around the world of waves of young people coming from everywhere and going to everywhere."[38]

Yeh declares, "Christianity is the only religion in the world that does not have a geographic center or an ethnic majority. World Christianity validates Christianity much more than a Western-only Christianity does. If there is a real God, it makes sense he would be a global God."[39] Even though God's invisible qualities, his eternal power, and divine nature are clearly seen in creation, and his written Word are enough to come to personal faith in him in a monocultural society, we only see the fullness of God as we experience the richness and expression of who he is through other cultures.

In *Polycentric Mission Leadership: Toward A New Theoretical Model for Global Leadership,* American missiologist Joseph Handley builds on Yeh's thesis of polycentric and polydirectional missions. With this in mind, he examines the need for a new mission leadership model. He identifies "…six key themes that characterize strong polycentric leadership. Leadership must be collaborative, communal, diverse, allow for entrepreneurial freedom, be

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[37] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter,* 28.

[38] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter,* 210.

[39] Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology*, 28.

relational, and be charismatic."[40] He espouses, "Over and above collaboration, decentralized leadership allows for each region of the world and every sector of a company to make decisions that are just in time and appropriate for the local context. In this way, agency is empowered through different centers, allowing better choices to be made that are relevant to the local situation."[41]

YWAM values and leadership model reflect these concepts. Foundational Value Seven reads, "YWAM is a Christ-centered, faith-based global volunteer movement, united by shared vision, core beliefs, foundational values, and relationships. We do not have a centralized structure. Every YWAM ministry has the privilege and spiritual responsibility to develop and maintain healthy relationships with appropriate authorities and circles of elders."[42]

Likewise, YWAM affirms the value of diversity and multiculturalism in leadership. YWAM is decentralized but is also a global community. "YWAM is international and interdenominational in its global scope as well as its local constituency. We believe that ethnic, linguistic, and denominational diversity, along with redeemed aspects of culture, are positive factors that contribute to the health and growth of the Mission."[43]

Although YWAM, for the most part, has been decentralized, there have been various leadership structures throughout the years. Significant steps were taken in 2014 to flatten the mission further. "First, it was the International Council (IC)…later called the Global Leadership Team (GLT) and then was known as the Global Leadership Forum (GLF). This body was

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[40] Joseph W. Handley, *Polycentric Mission Leadership: Toward a New Theoretical Model for Global Leadership* (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2022), 22.

[41] Handley, *Polycentric Mission Leadership*, 24.

[42] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter*, 181.

[43] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter*, 208.

disbanded in Singapore 2014 in order to put in place a flatter movement framework at the trans-local level in the place of what was becoming an increasingly hierarchical organizational structure."[44] Although far from perfect, on every leadership level, YWAM embraces a vision to see diversity and plurality in leadership.

> YWAM is called to function in teams in all aspects of ministry and leadership. We believe that a combination of complementary gifts, callings, perspectives, ministries and generations working together in unity at all levels of our Mission provides wisdom and safety. Seeking God's will and making decisions in a team context allows accountability and contributes to greater relationship, motivation, responsibility and ownership of the vision.[45]

Any effort to see this level of collaboration can only occur if the mission can see itself as a family. In *Our Global Families: Embracing Christian Identity in a Changing World,* American missiologists Todd Johnson and Cindy Wu suggest how, through a brotherly bond in Christ, the church has a tremendous opportunity to build bridges across national and cultural divides and to lead globally. They exhort, "As Christians we all belong to both the global human family and the global Christian family. How well we imitate Christ in our relationships with both global families is one of the great challenges of the twenty-first century."[46] They add three admonitions needed for the global Christian family to live in unity and be the light that the world desperately needs:

> First of all, we need a broader sense of Christian identity as we attempt to express our faith within the myriad of Christian denominations and traditions worldwide. How can we be faithful to our own tradition while being generous and engaging with Christians of other traditions? Second, we need to be better informed about other religions and build more significant friendships with people of other

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[44] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter*, 303.

[45] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter*, 197.

[46] Todd M Johnson and Cindy M Wu, *Our Global Families* Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2015, Introduction.

> religions. Third, we need to be more realistic about our ability to change the world (solve the world's problems).[47]

The reality is, as the Johnson and Wu state, the church has much work to do in uniting the grand family. "Within our global Christian family, difference has resulted in a very fragmented church. The Center for the Study of Global Christianity counts 45,000 denominations within Christianity today.[48] "One obstacle to unity is the impact that the American church continues to have on the global church…the stark individualism of American society hurts unity efforts in the worldwide church."[49] It seems the opportunity to build bridges will only happen if the Church from the North intentionally reaches out to their family in the Global South, sees their value, and realizes the need to learn from the rich perspective they have to offer. Being primarily a monocultural society, the North needs better training and orientation on how to relate to those who are different. "Contact for contact's sake is not sufficient; in fact, it might do more harm than good without minimal cross-cultural training and prayer. CQ in the church must especially be modeled and pursued by leadership."[50]

There is a great need to see new training models developed that are reflective in content and substance of the current Global Christian demographics. This is especially true in the area of leadership:

> The changing nature of theology has further implications for theological education and leadership training. Centers of theological education need to be established and further developed in the South, as there is a great need for non-Western exegetical studies which will help [Southerners] understand the Bible

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[47] Johnson and Wu, *Our Global Families,* Introduction.

[48] Johnson and Wu, *Our Global Families,* 56.

[49] Johnson and Wu, *Our Global Families*, 113.

[50] Johnson and Wu, *Our Global Families*, 150.

> better and which will complement the work that is being done by Western writers.[51]

In their article *Perspectives from Global South Christianity,* A diverse group of scholars and theologians, Phillip Lutterodt an American, Joab Cavalcanti a Brazilian, and Loun Ling Lee an Asian, when referring to the Global South, share these common challenges, "Frequently, financial support to missionaries is not long term. There are few candidates for ministries with a less 'visible' success, like Bible translation or cultural interpretation. Missionaries lack training and leadership development. Inadequate member care and personal development is provided."[52]

Reflecting on intercultural partnership and collaboration between the Global South and Global North in missions, they ask the following:

> What resources and expertise could Global North missions share with Global South indigenous missions that will strengthen them, eg in member care, intercultural training, and leadership development?
>
> What lessons can the Global North learn from Global South missions? For example, in inter-religious dialogues, as Christians in Asia have the rich experience of being effective witnesses for Christ in the midst of multi-faith communities.
>
> Will Global North churches and agencies receive into their midst Global South leaders and mission workers? Some call this 'reverse missions,' where we are willing to learn and receive help from those we have historically served.[53]

It is crucial for those in the Global North to understand that the need is not only for the benefit of the Global South but also for those in the North. It would behoove the North to learn from leaders in the Global South. He is the creator of all peoples and celebrates the cultural diversity that he has made. (Revelation 7:9). In the same way Jesus took his disciples into

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[51] Johnson and Wu, *Our Global Families*, 12.

[52] Philip Lutterodt, Joabe G Cavalcanti, and Loun Ling Lee, "Perspectives from Global South Christianity," *Lausanne Movement*, accessed October 2, 2023, https://lausanne.org/content/lga/2023-01/perspectives-from-global-south-christianity.

[53] Lutterodt, Cavalcanti, and Lee, "Perspectives from Global South Christianity.

Samaria in John 4, those in the North need to be the initiators to build bridges and relationships with brothers and sisters in the rest of the world. There is a need to create space in mission leadership with greater intercultural collaboration that reflects the current global demographics of the church. As British theologian Kirsteen Kim shares, "Since Global South churches and missions have matured (and are still growing) significantly over the past hundred years, mission leaders should encourage greater and deeper intercultural partnership and collaboration, such as that between Africans, Latin Americans, Asians, and Western missions."[54] The truth is that the Western World will miss out on the richness and fullness of who God is if they do not experience him through a multicultural perspective, beauty, and prism he has created in his universal body.

Missions and Transformation

Many potential Central American missionaries come from a background of struggle and poverty. They have felt and seen the pains of suffering, have found hope, and have often been part of the answer to seeing their families and communities rise out of poverty. This puts them in a unique position to bring hope to others at home and around the world.

In *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity,* American journalists, writers, and Pulitzer Prize winners Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn show that true fulfillment does not come from getting more for oneself but from helping others and giving from oneself to something greater than oneself. "A path is now appearing to show us how to have a positive impact on the world around us. This is a path of hopefulness, but also a path of

[54] Kirsteen Kim, "Unlocking Theological Resource Sharing between North and South," *Lausanne Movement*, accessed September 29, 2023, https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2017-11/unlocking-theological-resource-sharing-north-south.

fulfillment: typically, we start off by trying to empower others and end up empowering ourselves, too."[55] They interviewed scientists doing cognitive research concerning altruism. The results concluded that helping others makes a person feel better about themselves. This is not surprising and aligns with the biblical adage it is more blessed to give than to receive.[56]

Help coming from Central America to the rest of the world may seem counterintuitive. Still, Kristof and WuDunn found that the desire to help others is not determined by social class or economic status. "Philanthropy cuts across social class, and poor and middle-income Americans are particularly generous. Strikingly, those in the bottom 20 percent of incomes give away a higher percentage of their money (3.2 percent) than those in the top 20 percent (1.3 percent). About two-thirds of Americans donate to charity each year…"[57]

Their study on worthy causes is not limited to the USA but to the world's least privileged and to the causes of inequity. "…we also face the transcendent challenge of spreading opportunity so that a person's prospects depend less on the lottery of birth."[58] Many diverse examples of altruism are given throughout the pages, along with an understanding of the impact that giving can have on the giver and receiver. They present many opportunities, demonstrating that the question is not so much if one should give but more about the place of need that most motivates each individual's desire to help. Unlike the book *When Helping Hurts,* this book does not focus so much on the causes of poverty or the possible negative impact of helping. The

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[55] Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*, New York: Vintage Books, Penguin Random House LLC, 2014, [18.]

[56] Acts 20:35.

[57] Kristof and WuDunn, *A Path Appears,* 10.

[58] Kristof and WuDunn, *A Path Appears*, 33.

clarion call is whether donating, volunteering, or advocacy, people need to get out there and do something.

American sociologist Hunter, in *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*, states, "To be Christian is to be obliged to engage the world, pursuing God's restorative purposes over all of life, individual and corporate, public and private. This is the mandate of creation."[59] He gives the common arguments and logic driving what he calls the common view about culture. "The essence of culture is found in the hearts and minds of individuals—in what are typically called "values." Values are, simply, moral preferences; inclinations toward or conscious attachment to what is good and right and true."[60] He quotes many leading Christian voices who espouse the common view, Colson, Dobson, Vatican political scientist Robert George, and others. "If our culture is to be transformed, it will happen from the bottom up—from ordinary believers practicing apologetics over the backyard fence or around the barbeque grill… the real leverage for cultural change comes from transforming the habits and dispositions of ordinary people."[61] He continues, "Making disciples or formation, then, requires intentionality, and it entails the hard work of teaching, training, and cautioning believers with wisdom in the ways of Christ so that they are fit for any calling and any service to him."[62]

Seemingly, in contrast to this, with extensive historical and biblical studies, he opines that it is not the change of individual hearts and minds that changes culture, but that change happens

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[59] Hunter, James Davison. *To Change the World*, Oxford University Press, Kindle Edition, 4.

[60] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 6.

[61] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 8.

[62] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 227.

from the top down by the influence of a few elites at the center or the edge societal center. "…the deepest and most enduring forms of cultural change nearly always occur from the "top down." In other words, the work of world-making and world-changing are, by and large, the work of elites: gatekeepers who provide creative direction and management within spheres of social life." [63]

He declares the Christian community should enact the "Shalom" of God, which he describes as the "... vision of order and harmony, fruitfulness and abundance, wholeness, beauty, joy, and well-being. For the Christian, this was God's intention in creation, and it is his promise for the new heaven and the new earth."[64] This is done as the author explains as the faithful presence within. This, "first is that incarnation is the only adequate reply to the challenges of dissolution; the erosion of trust between word and world and the problems that attend it. From this follows the second: it is the way the Word became incarnate in Jesus Christ and the purposes to which the incarnation was directed that are the only adequate reply to challenge of difference."[65] One could say it is the incarnate Living Word, the presence of God in the believer, that goes with and shines through the believer in whatever they do. Of course, this will be most effective as the believer intentionally seeks his presence and identifies and walks out God's presence in all aspects of life. Hunter expresses it this way, "Only by being fully present to God as a worshipping community and as adoring followers can we be faithfully present in the world."[66]

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[63] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 41.

[64] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 228.

[65] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 241.

[66] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 244.

Hunter seems to be able to hold both the responsibility to impact those around him with the idea that true transformation only happens at the level of the elites.

In *Possible: A Blueprint for Changing How We Change the World,* Stephan Bauman, an American and president and CEO of World Relief, declares the opposite, "there are no ordinary people, only people who are bold enough to think they can save a life, or some corner of the world, and fierce enough to try."[67] Speaking of his own writing, he claims, "This book is a blueprint for deep change, an invitation to overhaul—indeed, reform—our faith and deeds, to recover ancient truth, and to impact the world in new ways."[68] He continues, "We face a crisis of vision, not will."[69]

In many places, a lack of missional vision seems, in part, to be the challenge with the church in Central America. Bauman puts the weight of the problem on self-centeredness. "Much of our faith community is organized around ourselves, mainly our spiritual and social welfare. Out of our excess, we devote a bit of time and resources to the vulnerable. But what if we were to flip this paradigm on its head and instead organize around God's love for the least first, where worship doesn't sidestep the world's suffering but includes them?"[70]

What will it take to see a shift in the vision of the church? "Change…begins with a complaint. And complaints rightly pursued end in a recovery of truth."[71] At first, this statement seemed too negative. Christians should not be complaining, but if a person cannot see that there

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[67] Stephan Bauman, *Possible: A Blueprint For Changing How We Change The World* Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2015, 3-4.

[68] Bauman, *Possible,* 10.

[69] Bauman, *Possible,* 10.

[70] Bauman, *Possible,* 14-15.

[71] Bauman, *Possible,* 27.

is a problem, something is missing, or something is wrong, then there are no reasons to seek a change. If it ended with the complaint, there would be no change. Bauman continues, "…then let your complaint become a prayer—the passionate, deeply honest kind—to galvanize your courage. Your courage will foster commitment, and your commitment will become the foundation for action. When done well, a complaint can move mountains."[72]

Bauman's exhortation that there are no ordinary people contrasts with Hunter, who stresses that only the elites can change the world. "In fact, the Reformation in the sixteenth century "sprang chiefly from the lower social strata" with Luther, Knox, Cranmer, and Zwingli coming from peasant families."[73] David Bornstien, a Canadian journalist in *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas,* afirms this:

> Social entrepreneurship is not about a few extraordinary people saving the day for everyone else. At its deepest level, it is about revealing possibilities that are currently unseen and releasing the capacity within each person to reshape a part of the world. It does not require an elite education; it requires a backpack. The corpus of knowledge in social entrepreneurship comes from first-hand engagement with the world—from asking lots of questions and listening and observing with a deep caring to understand.[74]

They both seem to fly in the face of Hunter who stated, "…the deepest and most enduring forms of cultural change nearly always occurs from the "top down." In other words, the work of world-making and world-changing are, by and large, the work of elites: gatekeepers who provide creative direction and management within spheres of social life."[75]

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[72] Bauman, *Possible,* 34.

[73] Bauman, *Possible,* 27.

[74] David Bornstein, *How To Change The World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*, 2nd ed. (New York, New York: Oxford Press, 2007), xvi.

[75] Hunter, *To Change The World*, 5.

Bauman references Jesus as his example, "Unlikely agents of change were important in the biblical narrative too… Jesus grew up in the sticks of a marginal country, hidden from a powerful empire. His ragtag group, uneducated and blue collar, launched a reformation upon which all other Christian movements are built."[76] It was said of Jesus, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?"[77] With God's vision in their hearts and an understanding of their identity, perhaps unlikely change in missions, development, and transformation can come from Central America.

In *Ekklesia: Rediscovering God's Instrument for Global Transformation.* Argentine Bible teacher and entrepreneur Ed Silvoso, candidly reminds the reader that church in the New Testament was not only a Sunday morning event to worship but was meant to be God's vehicle of transformation.

> The New Testament examples of church are vastly different from the contemporary notion that it is a place where members go, usually once a week. Back then, church always referred to people, never to buildings, and it was made up of individuals who operated 24/7 "from house to house" all over town as a transforming organism, not as a static institution (Acts 2:46; 5:42). Its objective was the transformation of people and of society, rather than acting as a transfer station for saved souls bound for heaven…During the days when Jesus walked this earth, however, Ekklesia—the Greek word translated into English as "church"—was not religious in nature or connotation at all. In fact, by the time He first uttered the word in the gospel of Matthew, it had been in use for centuries in both the Greek and Roman empires to refer to a secular institution operating in the marketplace in a governmental capacity. [78]

Relating to the transformation of society in her book *Kingdom Calling,* Sherman builds on the Hebrew concept of *tsaddiqim,* the word for righteous found in Proverbs 11:10. "When the

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[76] Bauman, *Possible,* 27.

[77] John 1:46.

[78] Ed Silvoso, *Ekklesia: Rediscovering God's Instrument for Global Transformation* Bloomington, MN: Chosen Books, 2017, 19-20.

righteous prosper, the city rejoices; when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy." As previously mentioned, Keller describes the righteous. "The righteous in the book of Proverbs are by definition those who are willing to disadvantage themselves for the community while the wicked are those who put their own economic, social, and personal needs ahead of the needs of the community."[79] Referring to the city rejoices in the verse, Sherman states, "This is deep, passionate rejoicing—not the "happy, happy" rejoicing of a birthday party but VE-Day–type rejoicing—"the war is over and we won" rejoicing. This is soul-soaring exultation."[80]

She proposes the ideal of vocational stewardship. "By vocational stewardship, I mean the intentional and strategic deployment of our vocational power—knowledge, platform, networks, position, influence, skills and reputation—to advance foretastes of God's kingdom."[81] She exhorts, "First, it means that many churches need to have a more robust, comprehensive view of what they should be aiming at missionally…Second, it means that churches need to take vocation much more seriously." [82]

In *His Kingdom Come*, Henry declares,

> We are called to a vocation. Vocation is our unique call of purpose, the call to serve beyond our daily tasks. Vocation is more than discipleship. Vocation is deeper and wider than career. Vocation is our very personal response to the voice of God. Vocation is our lifework, our special gift of worship, which is the sum of all our gifts, talents, and abilities to serve God's purpose in our generation.[83]

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[79] Keller, "Creation Care and Justice."

[80] Amy L. Sherman, *Kingdom Calling,* 17.

[81] Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, 20.

[82] Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, 19-20.

[83] John Henry, "Conversation on Calling," in *His Kingdom Come,* 184.

This is reflected in YWAM´s seven spheres of influence legacy word. The goal of the University of the Nations, "…is to train missionaries to become nation transformers. The seven spheres include the areas of Family, Economy, Government, Religion, Education, Media, and Celebration. These spheres exist within every society on earth – whether rural or urban, whether primitive or complex."[84]

What does this mean for the Central American church? The church in Acts was not a bastion of prosperity but was marked by generosity. "All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need." (Acts 2:44-45). In many ways, economically, the Central American churches reflect those mentioned in Acts, but they have been too narrowly focused as to what missions is. Resources are often relegated to expanding a church property or larger attendance. A greater understanding and release of members into their calling is needed. As Silvoso says, referring to the early church and Paul, "…he let them contextualize the truth and power of the Gospel in their own sphere of influence. To see what we have never seen, we (the Ekklesia) must do what we have never done, or else we will continue to see the old (church), no matter how much we dress it up as new."[85] With this understanding, could there be a wave of Central American missionaries mobilized into the seven spheres of influence in societies around the world?

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[84] Cunningham, *Values Matter, 88.*

[85] Silvoso, *Ekklesia*, 257.

Global Leadership in Missions

Is there a place for Central Americans in missionary global leadership? In examining the current literature on global leadership and the skills required, Central Americans would excel if given the opportunity. Ernest Gundling, Terry Hogan, and Karen Cvitkovich, American entrepreneurs, consultants, and global leadership specialists with Aperian Global, in *What is Global* Leadership*? 10 Key Behaviors that Define Great Global Leaders,* address the following questions. "What is global leadership, and how is it different from leadership in general? How can effective global leadership behaviors be disseminated as rapidly and efficiently as possible throughout an organization?"[86] To find answers to these questions, the authors interviewed 70 executives from 26 countries from distinct global industries. They discovered, "Cultural self-awareness is the first step toward seeing differences."[87] As the authors state,

> A challenge for many people in leadership roles as well as others working in multicultural environments is to be able to fully recognize and appreciate both commonality and difference (acceptance); then they need to transform their outlook and behaviors in a way that will make them most effective in handling the cultural differences that do exist (adaptation).[88]

In *Being Global,* regarding cultural awareness, Angel Cabrera, a Spanish-American academic, and Gregory Unruh, an American academic, are interested in how a person "…can actually transcend culture, become effective across cultural settings, effectively interact with culturally diverse individuals and organizations, and create value."[89]

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[86] Ernest Gundling, Karen Cvitkovich, and Terry Hogan, *What Is Global Leadership?* London: Nicholas Brealey, 2011, 29.

[87] Gundling and Cvitkovich, *What Is Global Leadership,* 38.

[88]Gundling and Cvitkovich, *What Is Global Leadership,* 25.

[89] Angel Cabrera and Gregory Unruh, *Being Global* (Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012), 9.

The key here is to create value. Much of the literature on global leadership centers around the dos and don'ts of cross-cultural behavior when, in actuality, truly valuing and loving people transcends culture. Although helpful, understanding and application cannot be accomplished through a simple orientation with the missionary candidate, and then they are ready to go. "Developing a global mindset is a lifelong process of learning, investing, and sustaining…Early exposure to different cultures that include—indeed, require—social engagement can be an effective way to build the foundations of a global mindset from an early age."[90] Speaking about what is needed to be multicultural, Darlene Cunningham adds,

> It takes time, observation skills, and an unoffendable heart, where your motivation is to understand and know your brother or sister… In YWAM, we want to be multi-generational as well as multi-cultural, making adjustments to draw upon the benefits and strengths of everyone… Every contribution is important. God designed you to play a special part. Just use whatever gifts He gives you for His glory. You can't create orchestra music alone. We need each other. And when we play in a beautiful spirit of unity, people will surely see and glorify Jesus.[91]

The second key aspect discovered by Gundling and Cvitkovich is to invite the unexpected. "Seeing differences also requires leaders to invite the unexpected. One of the many benefits of cultural self-awareness is that it contributes to a learning posture that is open to new information and experiences."[92] In YWAM, being flexible and bending with the unexpected is a call phrase often used. Cunningham points this out. "We truly need and desire for people to come with the skills to help make things run more efficiently, but they must be people who embrace young people and are flexible enough to live with some disorder."[93] Likewise,

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[90]Cabrera and Unruh, *Being Global*, 72.

[91] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter,* 205-207.

[92] Gundling and Cvitkovich, *What Is Global Leadership,*45.

[93] Darlene Cunningham, *Values Matter,* 94.

flexibility and adaptability are a hallmark of Latino culture. Christina Conti, American missionary to Peru, and Spanish Communication Coordinator for SIM, points out, referring to strengths in Latinos, "They are flexible with changing plans and adapt with a smile."[94] Along with cultural awareness and the ability to expect the unexpected, the skills to adapt and add value are essential**.** As Gundling and Cvitkovich state, "The behavior 'adapt and add value' means to balance adaptation to local practices with finding the best places to assert a different perspective or to act as a constructive change agent."[95]

A third multicultural leadership trait is "results through relationships." "The leadership behavior called results through relationships highlights the fact that strong, trusting relationships are nearly always the doorway to getting things done in a global context."[96] Again referring to relationships, in Conti's article "Advantages and difficulties in Being Latino on the Mission Field," She states, "They are interested in people and invest time in them…They show more trust, without fear of new personal relationships."[97]

It is easy to see the richness of attributes and qualities Latinos bring to global leadership and mission. Still, as Johnson reminds the church, those from the Global South are often not included in the global leadership conversation.

> While at an Evangelical conference in Wittenberg in 2017 celebrating 500 years of the Protestant Reformation, I presented our research showing that over 40% of all Protestants were Africans. Yet, out of the 100 people at the meeting, only a few were African. I was sitting next to a leader from Ghana when someone from the stage said that Africans were welcome at the table in this Evangelical movement. It was then that my colleague quietly recounted a Ghanaian proverb to

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[94] Christina Conti, "Ventajas y Dificultades de Ser Latino En El Campo Misionero," *Movilicemos*, accessed November 17, 2023, https://movilicemos.org/sites/default/files/recursos/2020/la%20fuerza%20latina%20todo.pdf.

[95]Gundling and Cvitkovich, *What Is Global Leadership*, 99.

[96] Gundling and Cvitkovich, *What Is Global Leadership*, 54.

[97] Conti, "Ventajas y Dificultades de Ser Latino En El Campo Misionero."

us: **"It is good if you invite me to your table, but it is far better if you invite me into the kitchen."**[98]

The table is where the guests receive prepared dishes. There is a need for inclusion in the leadership process, for Central Americans to be invited to the prayer, dialogue, planning, and decision-making.

Latin American Advantages and Challenges

It is clear that Central Americans are part of God's missionary plan, and they have many characteristics that make them great missions. "Movlicemos a la Iglesia," a multiorganizational project sponsored by SIM, has a course that gives sixteen advantages to being a Latin-American missionary on the field.[99] A translated and condensed list is provided here.

1. They have a passion for the unreached, are risk-takers, and are willing to go into dark and difficult places.
2. Their physical appearance helps them fit well into many unreached people groups.
3. They are relational, value friendship, and very hospitable.
4. They understand poverty, suffering and know how to live with few resources.
5. They can identify with oppression and violence.
6. Because of being a minority group in a Catholic culture, to a certain level, they can identify with family and societal pressure.
7. They are flexible with changing plans and adapt with a smile.
8. They understand bureaucracy and corruption.
9. They readily serve others.
10. They are creative and willing to learn new things.[100]

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[98] Todd Johnson, "All Peoples in God's Kitchen," *Gordon Conwell*, accessed December 5, 2023, https://www.gordonconwell.edu/blog/all-peoples-in-gods-kitchen/. (emphasis mine).

[99] SIM originally stood for the Sudan Interior Mission. In the 1980s, missions in Asia and South America joined with SIM. A third merged with SIM in 1998. Today, their official name around the world is simply SIM.

[100] Christina Conti, "Ventajas y Dificultades de Ser Latino En El Campo Misionero," *Movilicemos*, accessed November 17, 2023, https://movilicemos.org/sites/default/files/recursos/2020/la%20fuerza%20latina%20todo.pdf.

Nonetheless, Pablo Carrillo Mexican missionary, founder, and director of Pueblos Musulmanes Internacional, who has served in missions for over 30 years, has identified the struggle for Latinos in missions and has narrowed them into three categories:

> Problems within the worker: These are deteriorations of personal relationships with other workers, the inability to adapt to a new culture and learn the language, unresolved problems affecting one's emotional stability, and the lack of tools for spiritual survival.
>
> Problems in the participating church: These consist of lack of adequate financial resources, organizational differences, and an inability to help missionaries find meaningful work.
>
> Problems in the mission agency: These revolve around the lack of planning and strategy development, and lack of cooperation with other agencies.[101]

Concerning limited financial resources, he attests, "This is a major problem that we have faced in the development of our mission. Churches, unfortunately, can "forget" about their commitments, "out of sight, out of mind" as the saying goes."[102] This is coupled with "The sending church's lack of experience in cross-cultural work on the one hand, and the lack of mission vision."[103] This is reminiscent of the proverb, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18b).

Perhaps the lack of finances runs deeper than a lack of missional vision in the Church. In a published discussion on "Family Ties," Italian economists Alberto Alesina and Paola Giuliano studied the role of how families are organized and how the relationship between generations shapes the formation of values, which determine economic outcomes and influence national

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[101] Pablo Carrillo, "Struggles of Latin Americans in Frontier Missions," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12, (1995).

[102] Carrillo, "Struggles of Latin Americans in Frontier Missions."

[103] Carrillo, "Struggles of Latin Americans in Frontier Missions."

institutions. This was not research concerning family ties and missions, but nonetheless, it sheds light on the subject concerning the institution of the church. They found that,

> …strong family ties are negatively correlated with generalized trust; they imply more household production and less participation in the labor market of women, young adult and elderly. They are correlated with lower interest and participation in political activities and prefer labor market regulation and welfare systems based upon the family rather than the market or the government. Strong family ties may interfere with activities leading to faster growth, but they may provide relief from stress, support to family members and increased wellbeing.[104]

Given this perspective, one can surmise the potential conflict of interest the church can encounter in sending missionaries at the cost of the family norms and financial dynamics in the community.

The Central American welfare systems strongly rely on the family. The adult children together provide the safety net for their elderly parents. They do not send them to retirement homes, and government retirement pensions or social security-type programs typically do not cover the elderly's needs or are nonexistent. Their retirement is their children. Many parents, especially mothers, depend on their children, providing for and caring for them in their senior years.

Speaking into the lack of tools for Latin American missionary spiritual survival, Carrillo exclaims, "It amazes me to realize that on the field there are a number of Bible "illiterates"–those who do not know their Bible!"[105] Along with the evident lack of Bible literacy, concerning planning and strategy development, he opines, "Our experience over the years has taught us time and time again that improvisation is not the way to work. "Point and go" approaches seldom amount to anything, no matter how zealous one is. Personnel who are spiritually and

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[104] Alberto Alesina and Paola Guiliano, "Family Ties", *IZA Discussion Paper Series*, no. 7376 (2013).

[105] Carrillo, "Struggles of Latin Americans in Frontier Missions."

academically qualified are required if we desire to do our mission task well."[106] In this case, the adage "fast is slow and slow is fast" may be the proper approach in sending Central American missionaries.

In a 2023 analysis of missions from the Global South, the Lausanne Movement has identified challenges similar to those of Carrillo. "Frequently, financial support to missionaries is not long-term. There are few candidates for ministries with a less 'visible' success, like Bible translation or cultural interpretation. Missionaries lack training and leadership development. Inadequate member care and personal development is provided."[107]

As stated earlier, there is a marked lack in the area of Biblical and theological training from a multicultural perspective, which leads to a narrow understanding of God's character and mission. Korean theologian Moonjang Lee sheds light on this need. "The various interpretive tools devised in Western biblical scholarship still dominate the way the Bible is studied in the non-western world. There seems to be a widely held assumption that the interpretation of the Bible should be carried out in the traditional Western academic style, and only after that is the cross-cultural communication of the interpretation to be considered."[108] In order to have fullness in the understanding of the creator and his mission, there is a need for multicultural public discourse in the areas of theology and missiology. Bediako points out, "In the scriptures of the Christian church, the foundation documents of the Christian tradition of divine self-revelation,

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[106] Carrillo, "Struggles of Latin Americans in Frontier Missions."

[107] Lutterodt, Cavalcanti, and Lee, "Perspectives from Global South Christianity.

[108] Moonjang Lee et al., *Mission in the Twenty-First Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission*, ed. Andrew F. Walls and Cathy Ross (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 148.

prophetic discourse about God and the world was always public discourse, offered in a commonly shared human space."[109]

Often, due to social economic reasons, English being required, and a lack of understanding of the importance and value of the Central American contribution, this space is not given. If one person or group is not present, they are not part of the conversation; if they are not part of the conversation, the loss not only occurs to those missing but to the greater body of Christ and the fullness of knowing him and his mission.

As Peruvian missiologist Samuel Escobar points out, it should be noted that missions did not begin with people of great means:

> Drive and inspiration to move forward and take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, crossing all kinds of geographical and cultural barriers, is the work of the Holy Spirit. There is an element of mystery when the dynamism of mission does not come from people in positions of power or privilege, or from the expansive dynamism of a superior civilization, but from below—from the little ones, those who have few material, financial or technical resources but who are open to the prompting of the Spirit. Many Western missionary organizations started in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as humble and insignificant efforts of visionary people before they grew to become large, well-financed organizations. It is not merely coincidence that the form of Christianity that has blossomed in recent decades, especially among the poor urban masses, is that which emphasizes the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.[110]

Another challenge is the lack of funds and access to theological training. Why is this important? As British missiologist Christopher J.H. Wright in the Lausanne Cape Town Commitment concluded, "Those of us who lead churches and mission agencies need to acknowledge that theological education is intrinsically missional. Those of us who provide theological education need to ensure that it is intentionally missional, since its place within the

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[109] Bediako et al, *Mission in the Twenty-First Century,* 117.

[110] Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 19.

academy is not an end in itself, but to serve the mission of the Church in the world."[111] Theological education, at its core, needs to be intentionally missional. Like much of the Global South, Central America has little access to missional theological education. British theologian Kirsteen Kim expands on this:

> In the South, many churches are led by people without the benefit of theological education and without access to it. However, although concrete data on theological education in the South is lacking, regional theological associations report rapid growth. Moreover, some faculty at institutions in the South now have higher levels of faculty qualifications to enable them to offer doctoral degrees. Despite the shifting picture, the absolute majority of teaching staff, scholarship funds, theological libraries and publications are still located in the North.[112]

Contributing factors for the lack of missional vision and culture in the Central American church are a lack of funds and comprehensive missional and theological training. "Along with the development of missional church, we need missional theological education. Becoming missional is not just a matter of adding in optional courses in 'missiology' or 'global Christianity'; it requires a paradigm shift in the way the entire theological curriculum is taught."[113]

Conclusion

Yes, there are many challenges to mobilizing missionaries from Central America, but the mission is God's, and he remains faithful. Escobar concludes, "The script is still encoded in the vocabulary of Matthew the Evangelist or Paul the Apostle, but there are new actors in the drama. Side by side with the Americans or Europeans, you now find Asians, Africans, and Latin

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[111] Christopher J H Wright, *The Cape Town Commitment* (Orlando, Florida: Lausanne Library, 2010), 107.

[112] Kim, "Unlocking Theological Resource Sharing between North and South."

[113] Kim, "Unlocking Theological Resource Sharing between North and South."

Americans."[114] Revelation 9:7 show the nations worshiping side by side. "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands." There are still vital roles to play and acts to perform in God's mission with Central American brothers and sisters working side by side with the God's global family.

[114] Escobar, *The New Global Mission*, 17.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN

Introduction

Returning to the thesis question, how can YWAM see an increase in Central Americans trained through the University of the Nations courses, mobilized, and sustained into full-time staff and global missions? The research in this project seeks to gather the data needed to see how UofN/YWAM can better train, network, retain full-time staff, and mobilize Central Americans into global missions. The initial plan was to gain statistical data concerning student training for YWAM Central America from the UofN registrar. The data available was adequate in giving the overall numbers of those trained but did not indicate the nationalities of those trained, and there was no data on the number of missionaries or staff sent from each location.

Three research studies were conducted to understand the problem better and find possible answers. The first was a survey sent out to YWAM's fifteen operating locations in Central America to gain data on the actual numbers of Central Americans trained, serving as full-time staff, and mobilized into global missions. The second was qualitative research, using semi-structured interviews with YWAM campus directors, training directors, missionary agency leaders, and mission pastors serving in Central America. Finally, research with three focus groups was completed at the first post-pandemic YWAM Central American staff gathering in Guatemala.

YWAM Central American Campus Leader Survey

To accurately measure the reality of where YWAM currently stands in its training and staff retention and mobilization of Central Americans, the following questions were sent out to the fifteen YWAM training campuses offering University of the Nations (UofN) courses in Central America. The breakdown and number of the YWAM campuses surveyed are as follows: Panama one, Costa Rica five, Nicaragua three, Honduras one, and Guatemala three. At each location, the YWAM campus director completed the survey, which resulted in 100% completion responses. The survey was conducted in Spanish and translated to English for this study.

Survey Questions

1-6. The first six questions were to gather information about the YWAM location and the campus director responding to the survey. The remaining questions are as follows.

7. How many Central Americans currently serve as full-time staff in your locations?
8. How many Central Americans have served or are serving cross-culturally from your location?
9. In what countries are the above Central American staff serving full-time?
10. What is the average length of full-time service for Central Americans in your location?

    __ 6 months – 1 year
    __ 1 – 2 years
    __ 3 – 5 years
    __ More than five years
    __ Add comments:

11. How many of your Central American staff have served more than five years in YWAM?
12. How many of your Central American staff have the full financial support needed?
13. How many of your Central American staff are supported by their local Church?

14. What are the primary sources of support for your Central American staff? Examples include friends, family, local churches, small businesses, etc. List the top 3.
15. Approximately what percentage of the financial support given to your Central American staff comes from Central America?
16. What are three primary reasons your Central American staff do not serve long-term?
17. How many times a year do you offer the Discipleship Training School (DTS)?[1]
18. How many Central Americans have completed the DTS at your location in the last ten years?
19. How do you recruit Central American students? Please rank the following on a scale of 1-4, with one being the lowest and four the highest:

    __ Social media
    __ Webpage
    __ Word of mouth
    __ Conferences
    __ Add additional comments:

20. What UofN undergraduate courses and additional training do you offer at your campus?
21. How many Central American students have completed undergraduate missionary courses at your location in the last ten years?
22. In the last ten years, after completing training courses at your location, what percentage of the graduates have joined YWAM as full-time staff for at least two years in the mission?

[1] This question is asked because the DTS is an intensive, live-learn, 3-month introduction course to missions with a 2–3-month field assignment. The DTS is the gateway into YWAM and the minimum prerequisite to be full-time staff in YWAM.

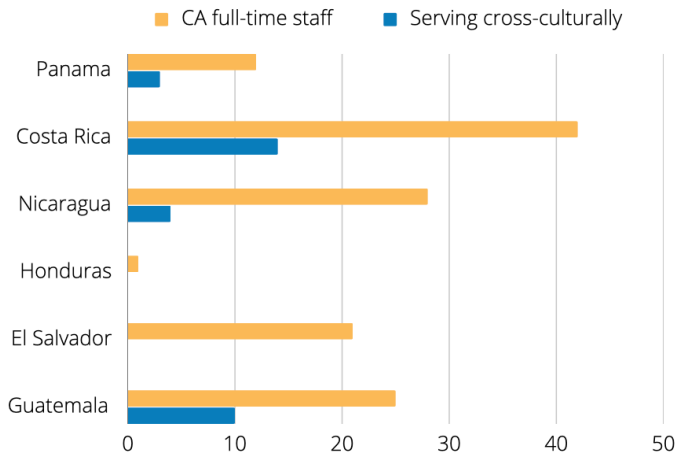
Survey Results and Analysis

All relevant data and analysis needed from the research are included in the following sections.

Fields of Service: Questions 7 to 9

There is a stark disparity between the number of full-time YWAM Central American staff currently serving in Central America, 129, and those sent to serve in a cross-cultural context 28. Questions seven and nine are combined in the following graph by nation to show this contrast. Costa Rica far surpasses the rest of the region. Still, the numbers of Nicaraguan and Guatemalan total staff and those sent to serve cross-culturally are surprising when you consider Nicaragua's GDP is three times less than that of Costa Rica. Guatemala is less than half that of Costa Rica.[2] Another notable indicator is compared to the others, Honduras is struggling in both categories.

Figure 6. Central American YWAM Staff Serving Full-time.



[2] "GDP per Capita (Current US$)," *World Bank Open Data*, accessed December 6, 2023, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD.

The answers from question ten show that combined, Central American YWAM staff have or are serving full-time in fifteen nations outside Central America, four of which are highly restricted. Additionally, the answers indicated that although question two specifically requested the numbers of those serving cross-culturally, three of the countries listed would be considered similar cultures to that of the missionary. A more accurate number is that Central American staff are serving in twelve nations with substantially different cultures.

Staff Retention and Average Amount of Years Served: Questions 10 - 11

With these questions, the goal was to determine the average years YWAM Central American staff served. How many staff are currently serving more than five years is also included. These are calculated by YWAM campus locations.

Table 3. YWAM Staff Average Years Served by Campus.

	Location	Avg. yrs. served.	Staff five+ yrs.
-	Boquete Panama	3-5	7
-	San Jose Costa Rica	3-5	6
-	Limon Costa Rica	1	0
-	Heredia Costa Rica	1-2	5
-	Nicoya Costa Rica	3-5	2
-	Liberia Costa Rica	1-2	3
-	Managua Nicaragua	1-2	2
-	Diriamba Nicaragua	1-2	7
-	Bluefields Nicaragua	1-2	2
-	Tegucigalpa Honduras	1-2	0
-	Santa Ana El Salvador	5+	2
-	San Salvador El Salvador	1-2	4
-	Guatemala City Guatemala	3-5	10
-	Antigua Guatemala	1-2	5
-	San Miguel Chicaj Guatemala	1-2	1

All the YWAM locations with staff service averaging 3-5 years, except for San Salvador and Heredia, have 30+ years of operation in Central America. This may account for the higher

figures in staff retention. For the number of staff serving more than five years, it stands to reason that those operating the longest in the region would have an increase of Central American staff serving in this category.

Another interesting observation is that Panama Boquete, San Jose, Nicoya, Diriamba, and Guatemala City are either led by a national or have a long-standing number of nationals in their leadership team. This could indicate greater respect, influence, and authority with the Church in their respective nations, resulting in more local acceptance of their members serving with in YWAM. Further research outside of the scope of this study is needed to verify whether or not this connection exist.

Income and Financial Support: Questions 12 to 15

Figure 7. Origin of Financial Support

These questions specifically explore the income and financial support of YWAM Staff in Central America. Some of the data conclusions in this section were telling. As mentioned previously, at the time of the survey, the total number of full-time YWAM staff serving in Central America was 129; of this number, only 57 have full support. Two-thirds of the support comes from the Global North. The most startling statistic is that of those 129, less than 1% are financially supported by their home church. Ten of the fifteen locations reported that none of their Central American staff receive financial support from their home church.

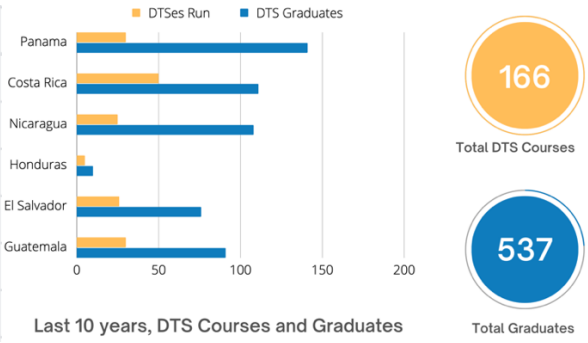
When looking at the top three primary sources from which YWAM Central American staff receive their financial support, all fifteen locations listed friends, twelve included family, four microenterprises or work, and seven listed churches. Upon further analysis, it should be noted that of the seven that listed church support as one of the three, four indicated the church support was from the USA. This would reduce the number to only three of the locations surveyed indicating that their staff receive some level of financial support from the local churches in Central America. When tabulating the total percentage of income and support coming to staff from Central American sources together from each location, the overall percentage for the region is 32%. This indicates that more than two-thirds of support for Central Americans comes from outside the region.

Recruitment and Training: Questions 17-22

Question sixteen does not flow naturally with the analysis, so it has been placed at the end for continuity. For questions seventeen and eighteen, the goal is to identify the number of opportunities available for students to do YWAM's intensive introduction course to missions, the DTS, and the numbers that have completed the DTS in each nation.

Figure 8. Disciple Training Schools Run and Number of Graduates

Last 10 years	DTSes Run	DTS Graduates
Panama	30	141
Costa Rica	50	111
Nicaragua	25	108
Honduras	5	10
El Salvador	26	76
Guatemala	30	91



In the last ten years, 166 DTS courses have been run, with 537 Central Americans graduating. Note that the numbers only represent Central Americans who trained and do not include graduates from other nations. The number of Central American student graduates per each DTS course per nation is Panama 4.7, Costa Rica 2.2, Honduras 4, Nicaragua 4.3, Honduras 2, El Salvador 2.9, and Guatemala 3.

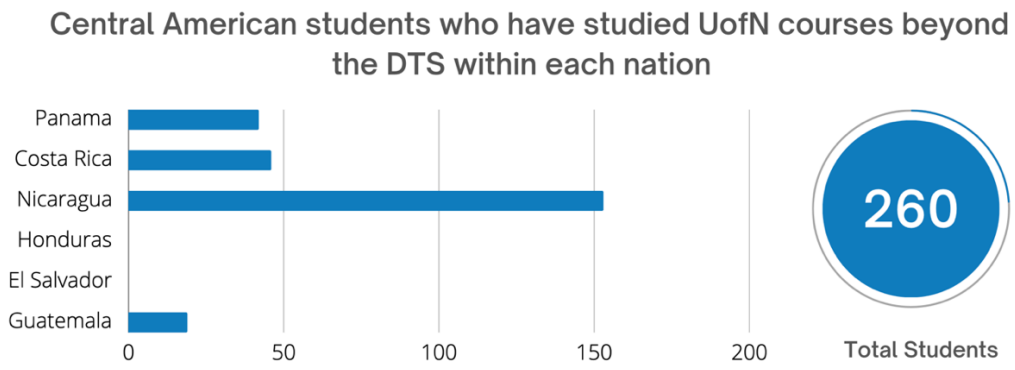
For question 19, when ranking how they recruit their students, responses were a fifty-fifty split between word of mouth and social media. Countries that primarily relied on word of mouth for recruiting students were Panama and Guatemala.

As mentioned, the DTS is the UofN's introductory course to missions. Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Guatemala each offer training beyond the DTS. The following is a list of UofN courses offered in each nation beyond the DTS.

- Panama: Discipleship Bible School (DBS), School of Ministry and Leadership Development (SLMD), and the School of Strategic Missions (SOSM).
- Costa Rica: School of Ministry and Leadership Development (SLMD), School of Frontier Mission (SOFM), School of Sustainable Development (SSD), and the School of Dance Ministries (SDM).
- Nicaragua: Bible School for the Nations (BSN) and Teachers for the Nations, English for Missions.
- Guatemala: Bible School for the Nations (BSN) and Teachers for the Nations.

Question 21 examines the number of Central American students who have completed further UofN training at each location. For the graph below, tallies are by nation, not individual YWAM locations.

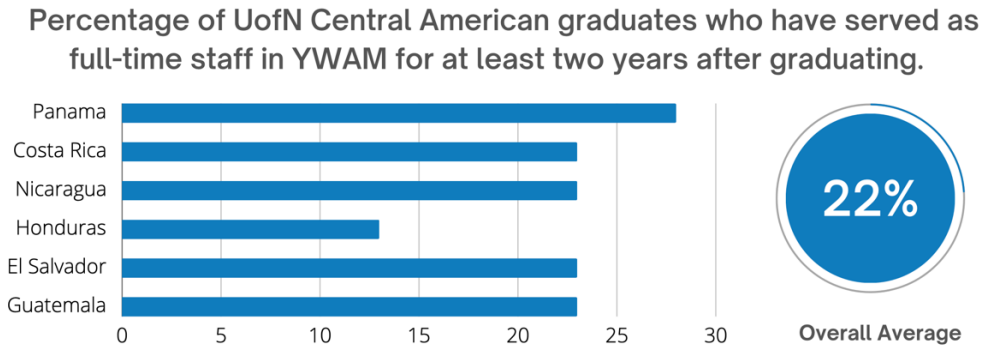
Figure 9. C.A. Students Trained in Post-DTS UofN Courses



YWAM Diriamba Nicaragua listed 150 students at their location alone. This high number may be because it is one of Central America's longest-standing campuses, offering post-DTS courses.

Like questions ten and eleven, question twenty-two seeks to discover the transition and retention of Central American students to full-time staff in YWAM. The following graph shows the number of UofN Central American graduates from any of the UofN courses who have served as full-time staff in YWAM for at least two years after graduating.

Figure 10. Students Serving in YWAM Two or More Years After Graduating



The above graph shows that 78% of Central American UofN graduates do not continue with YWAM. In saying this, it is essential to note that many students studying with YWAM come for the training with plans to serve in their local Church, another ministry, or a career in the

workplace. Nonetheless, this percentage indicates the pressures and obstacles against the missionary candidate continuing into full-time service.

Survey Conclusion

The answers to question sixteen have intentionally been left to this conclusion and provide a segue into the qualitative semi-structured interviews section of the research. The question asked, "What are three primary reasons your Central American staff do not serve long-term?" Out of fifteen YWAM/UofN locations surveyed, fourteen indicated lack of finances as a primary reason. In second place, with ten responses, was a lack of commitment, vision, or distractions from the call. With nine responses, family expectations came in third. Additional mentions were relationship problems, lack of vision in the local Church, not being called to YWAM, and personal issues.

Semi-Structured Interviews

As the founder and director of YWAM Panama I have invested over 28 years endeavoring to recruit, train and mobilize Central American into missions. Even though many have expressed a call to missions, very few have followed through with that calling. There was often a failure to start, or the potential missionary, once finishing basic missionary training, would abandon the call. In my conversations with these students, the reasons given would often center around the needs of their family or the local church. From these conversations, a desire to find answers began to grow. What are the root obstacles hindering Central Americans who feel a call to missions from pursuing and following through with their missionary call? Up until this point, I had my own experience and some limited anecdotal evidence, but even with this, it could

be unique to only YWAM Panama. There was a need to clarify and to engage in profound research to identify the obstacles and to see if there was commonality throughout Central America.

With the research, the desire was, through semi-structured interviews, to first collect accurate data from those with boots on the ground to verify the reality of the situation from those working with training and mobilizing Central Americans into global missions, especially in the context of YWAM, but with other organizations as well. Second, the research hoped to better aid in creating a framework for possible solutions.

Identifying the problem

A cross-section of people, including senior YWAM Central American training and ministry leaders, leaders of other missionary organizations, and pastors actively involved in the Central American missions movement, were interviewed to identify the problem in its setting. The hope was that by combining these perspectives trustworthy data would be collected.

Thirty-four Central American leaders were interviewed, each involved in training or mobilizing Central American missionaries or a combination of both. Those interviewed consisted of twenty YWAM Central American campus or training directors, five YWAM Central American regional leaders, five leaders of other mission organizations, and four pastors actively involved in mobilizing Central American missionaries. Every person in the group was either from or serving in Central America. The participants were from Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Holland, and the USA. As stated in Chapter One, because they are not part of what YWAM designates as the geographical region for Central America, Mexico and Belize were not included.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were not in person but via phone calls

and video chats such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. In addition to verbal communication, each of those interviewed provided written answers to the questions asked in their mother tongue. The top three answers were tallied and placed into categories to analyze the data.

The Questions Asked

In the interviews, only two fundamental questions were asked. 1. What are the three biggest challenges or obstacles as to why Central Americans do not go into missions?
2. What are the three biggest challenges or obstacles preventing Central Americans from staying on the field? The answers to these questions have confirmed some of what was learned in the previous survey and personal observations, but there were also a few surprises. Additionally, the interviews provided greater perspective and understanding of the problem.

The Data Collected

What are the three biggest challenges or obstacles as to why Central Americans do not go into missions? Only a short title is given for each answer along the number of people who gave that particular response. Greater explanation is given in the analysis.

1. There is a lack of finances: 33 people.
2. There is a lack of vision, culture, and commitment in the local Church for long-term missions: 26 people.
3. Family ties and expectations: 20 people.
4. There is a lack of or inadequate missions training: 16 people.

5. Inferiority and insecurity in the in the potential missionary prevents them from pursuing the call: 7 people.
6. Indifference towards the call and a lack of long-term commitment in the potential missionary: 5 people.
7. The challenge of language and culture learning: 3 people.

What are the three biggest challenges or obstacles preventing Central Americans from staying on the field?

1. The is a lack of finances: 29 people.
2. The missionary lacks vision and commitment: 19 people.
3. There is a lack of vision, culture, and commitment in the local Church for long-term missions: 12 people.
4. There is a lack of training and testing for those sent out: 12 people.
5. Relationship problems: 12 people.
6. Pressure from family to return home or to get a real job: 9 people.
7. There is a lack of a defined system in the local Church to maintain missionaries on the field: 6 people.
8. There is a lack of member care: 5 people.
9. Health problems: 1 person.

Conclusions from Data Analysis

For each section, greater depth and additional commentary will only be given for the top three answers for each question. The answers given in the interviews for the first questions were clear and precise, making them easy to categorize. The answers to the second question were more ambiguous and varied, making them more complicated to classify. To add to the ambiguity, the third response to the second question ended in a three-way tie. When overlap and similarity are encountered in the answers to both questions, the secondary answers are included in the discussion with the top answer. Also, please note that the reasons for not going into missions were often overlapped with those for not staying on the field.

Three Biggest Obstacles as to why Central Americans do not go into Missions

1. There is a lack of Finances (33 responses). This was, unsurprisingly, the top answer for both questions. On face value, it comes down to simple economics. As previously stated in Chapter One, missiologist Todd Johnston points out in his lecture on Global Christianity that even though the majority Church is now in the Global South, the majority of the resources for missions reside in the North:

> Christians of the Global South represent 64% of all Christians but receive only about 32% of all Christian income. This disadvantages them in many areas, including health, education, communications, and overall quality of life. This imbalance is one of the great tragedies of global Christianity that could not have been easily predicted by our colleagues in Edinburgh in 1910.[3]

This imbalance not only puts Central Americans at a disadvantage in their quality of life but greatly hinders them from engaging in God's missional call. Central American Christians indeed have the same Provider God as Christians in the North. Still, the economic condition of

[3] Todd Johnson, Lecture, Navigating Global Christianity, (Brazil, September 2015)

the Church in Central America makes sending missionaries challenging, thus impeding this vast army of missional workers from impacting the nations. This echoes Paul's query to the New Testament church of Rome. "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? **And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?** As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Rom. 10:14-15 emphasis added)

To add to these economic woes, the Central American Church often does not have a culture of giving to missions. When referring to this, Edgar Chavez, Salvadorian missions trainer and former YWAM director for Central America, proclaimed, "There was no culture of giving taught by the missionaries that planted our churches. This idea comes from the fact that the missionaries who came here paid for everything. The concept most churches have is if we need something, we need to ask missionaries or churches in the United States. The Church sees no responsibility to give financial support to missions."[4]

Tomas Rodriguez, Panamanian Assembly of God missionary to Europe, when asked why the Church does not give to missions, put it this way, "With finances, we have developed a concept of dependence on others. We have a poverty mentality, thinking that we are too few and too poor."[5] Guido Maldonado, director of Movida International, Panama, echoed the same sentiment. "The Latin American missionary's…obstacle is the self-perception of economic

[4] Edgar Chavez, Missionary trainer and former Director YWAM Central America, interview by author, July 7, 2020.

[5] Tomas Rodriguez, Assembly of God missionary to Belgium, interview by author, July 7, 2020.

poverty, believing that this may be a problem for his developing any medium and long-term work in the mission field."[6]

From those interviewed, there seems to be more of a poverty mentality than a lack of finances for missions. Panamanian Pastor Alex Tejada expressed it this way, "In many Central American churches, missionaries are only believed to be people coming from first world countries, and at the same time they have a third world mentality about themselves. This error makes them think that they do not have the economic strength to promote or enter missions with passion and vitality."[7]

2. There Is a lack of vision, culture, and commitment in the local Church for long-term missions. (26 responses). The Church's lack of missionary vision, culture, and commitment was the second most prominent theme and appeared to contribute significantly to the lack of finances. As former YWAM staff and Panamanian Pastor Cesar Forrero stated, "A high percentage of mission candidates do not have a missionary church and generally end up migrating to churches with a missionary vision."[8] This migration is often to international churches, which goes hand in hand with the poverty mentality mentioned previously.

Rene and Migdalia Amador, directors of YWAM Bluefields Nicaragua, have successfully taken Nicaraguans on short-term mission trips to Muslim nations in North Africa. In the interview with Rene, he shared the challenge facing those candidates who want to go into

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[6] Guido Maldonado, Director Movida International, Panama, interview by author, July 7, 2020.

[7] Alex Tejada, Southern Baptist Pastor, Panama City, interview by author, July 7, 2020.

[8] Cesar Forrero, Author, Former YWAM staff, Former director Cooperación Misionera Panameña, Pastor at Centro de Restuaracion Familiar Nueva Vida and Director of Infusion Ministries Latin America, interview by author, July 4, 2020.

missions long-term. “The first challenge, I believe, is what we face in the local Church. The Church believes in missions but feels missionary work is only for highly developed countries. They believe they exist only as missionary receiving countries.”[9]

Pedro Sinfontes, Venezuelan director of Liderazgo Creativo (Creative Leadership) in Panama and Business as Mission BAM coach, answered, “Lack of missionary vision. We are still seeing our “Jerusalem,” and we do not see the ethnic groups that live amongst us. We also don’t see other ways to complete the great commission. The challenge is understanding the times and raising awareness of our opportunities to do missions in many ways.”[10] As Director of Frontier Missions for YWAM Central America, American missionary Douglas Johnston stated, “There’s a lack of support from local pastors and therefore the local Church. There is still an attitude that the local Church must come first before all, and until that is perfect and needs nothing more, which will never happen, all the focus needs to stay there.”[11]

Julio Leva, founder of CMP, Cooperación Misionera Panameña, Panama’s first interdenominational mission organization, often says in Spanish that the pastor can either be “el clave,” the key, or “el clavo,” the nail to missions.[12] He can open or close the door to missions in his Church. In many cases, one of the biggest obstacles to sending missionaries is the local pastor. One reason is that local churches are often more concerned with keeping their congregations and ministries growing and see mission organizations as a threat to that, by taking away their best church members. This mistrust toward mission agencies was expressed in greater

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[9] Rene Amador, Director of YWAM Bluefields, Nicaragua, interview by author, July 6, 2020.

[10] Pedro Sinfontes director of Director of Liderazgo Creativo, Business and BAM coach. Interview by author, July 6, 2020.

[11] Douglas Johnston, Director of Frontier Missions for YWAM Central America., interview by author, July 7, 2020.

[12] Julio Leva, Lecture at YWAM Panama City, Panama, 2008.

detail by Tejada. “There is a lack of alliances with agencies and other ministries to promote missions.” He went on to say, referring to churches, “Central Americans think, if they ally with other organizations, they will lose their leader or worker. They are afraid to trust other organizations.”[13]

YWAM leaders often must go the extra mile to gain the trust of a local pastor in order for them to release one of their church members to train or serve with the mission. His blessing typically means that the missionary will not be seen as a rebel but does not indicate that the Church will support them financially. In my own 28 years in Panama, I have not seen a local Panamanian church give meaningful support to a Panamanian YWAM missionary. The result is that the potential missionary often looks for a career outside of the Church that will provide them with an income, or they decide to become a pastor because that is the only way the denomination or local Church will give them a salary.

The fourth highest obstacle inhibiting Central Americans from going into missions went hand in hand with lack of vision. Sixteen interviewees indicated a lack of training, mentorship models, and an understanding of missions. Tejada lamented. “There is little study or training in the reality of missions in the world. Children are not told about the history of the missions and missionaries. When studying missions, they should include the names of Latin Americans who have been missionaries and started ministries.”[14] Costa Rican missionary YWAM Regional leader Giacomo Coghi stated as his number one reason, “The local church has little culture for

[13] Alex Tejada, Southern Baptist Pastor, Panama City, interview by author, July 7, 2020.

[14] Alex Tejada, Southern Baptist Pastor, Panama City, interview by author, July 7, 2020.

cross-cultural short-term mission trips, which would allow participants to get early exposure to missions, thus contributing to their calling."[15]

3. Family Ties and Expectations (20 responses). Twenty participants indicated family ties and the pressure of family expectations as tremendous obstacles hindering Central Americans from going into missions. Nine gave the same answer as to why Central American missionaries do not stay on the field. The interviews revealed that often, there is call to missions, but they are unwilling to leave their families. They feel an obligation to fulfill their parent's desires for them and are expected to provide for them. Interestingly, only those serving with YWAM indicated family ties in their top three obstacles. Perhaps this is because the majority of those interviewed serve with YWAM, and YWAM's focus is youth.

As Douglas Johnston put it, "The second obstacle would be family. Latin Americans are very close to their family. In the U.S., families are often spread out across multiple states and rarely see each other. For a Latino, the idea of being far from family for a long time is unthinkable, especially as a single."[16]

This problem has been so prevalent with Panamanian YWAM students and staff that it is jokingly called "mamitis," a sickness that doesn't allow you to leave mom. In all seriousness, this is a considerable obstacle for Central Americans to go into missions. Salvadorian missionary Suzy Alaya de Alhberg, co-director of YWAM Antigua Guatemala, placed it as the top obstacle. "Number one, if they are single, they feel responsible for providing for their parents. Family ties

[15] Giacomo Coghi, YWAM Central America Regional Elder, interview by author, July 4, 2020.

[16] Douglas Johnston, Director of Frontier Missions for YWAM Central America, interview by author, July 7, 2020.

are powerful."[17] American missionary Carol Chavez, a pioneer in YWAM Central America and a missionary with over 30 years in the mission, summarized it this way,

> Another obstacle is family. Many young people believe, get excited, and feel called into missions, but their families are opposed. They want them to get an education to get a good job and then be able to support a family and make something of their futures. This is understandable in all cultures, but I think that Latino parents want their children to finish their education and maybe do short-term volunteer work or go on a mission trip, but not anything other than that. It's a lot of pressure for them to go against what the family is saying. Many times, it is not just the parents but the extended family. "You are going to waste your life." "You need an education to get a job to support yourself."[18]

A published discussion on "Family Ties" Alesina and Giuliano reviewed how the roles of families are organized and how the relationship between generations shapes the formation of values, which determine economic outcomes and influence national institutions. Their research was not directed to family ties in missions but nonetheless shed light on the subject. They found,

> Strong family ties are negatively correlated with generalized trust; they imply more household production and less participation in the labor market of women, young adults, and elderly. They are correlated with lower interest and participation in political activities and prefer labor market regulation and welfare systems based upon the family rather than the market or the government. Strong family ties may interfere with activities leading to faster growth, but they may provide relief from stress, support to family members, and increased wellbeing.[19]

The Central American welfare systems strongly rely on the family. The adult children together provide the safety net for their elderly parents. They do not send them to retirement homes, and government retirement pensions or social security programs typically do not cover the needs of older adults or are nonexistent. Their retirement is their children. Many parents,

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[17] Susy Alaya de Alhberg: Co-director YWAM Anitgua Guatemala, interview by author, July 4, 2020.

[18] Carol Chavez, Pioneer in YWAM Central America, former Co-director of YWAM Guatemala City, YWAM Central American elder, currently on staff at YWAM San Jose, Costa Rica, interview by author, July 6, 2020.

[19] Albeto Alesini and Paola Guiliano, "Family Ties."

especially mothers, depend on their children, providing and caring for them in their senior years. As veteran Central America YWAM leader, American missionary, Terry Keith put it,

> Families do not see missions as a career. For this reason, they try to discourage their young people from pursuing it. Most expect their children to get a university education and to develop their careers, which will sustain them and their family. Even though we feel that Latin culture is *machista*, in reality, it is actually matriarchal, where the mother holds a lot of control over her children. I have said for many years that we need to pray that Latin mothers would release their children to missions, especially their sons. Many sons feel obligated to provide for their mothers and are controlled by guilt.[20]

Three Biggest Obstacles Preventing Central Americans from Staying on the Field

Foreign missionaries must be self-aware and intentional about not letting their culture and opinions dominate those they try to reach. The very resources they have can put them in a place where they unknowingly come across as superior or think their culture holds the correct interpretation and application of truth. This can create a culture of paternalism in the people the missionary is trying to reach. When this happens, the missionary can unintentionally take away a measure of dignity from people, which in turn places within them a poverty mindset of dependency. Believing they do not have the resources, power, and ability to help others, they now only perceive themselves as a mission field and not a missionary sending people. This is echoed by Escobar:

> Foreign missionaries must always be aware that they may be carriers of the material tools or the intellectual vehicles of the globalization process. Respect for the local and the indigenous is indispensable, and missionaries can be trained to be sensitive to other cultures and critical of their own. Many times, missionaries embody the tension between the global and the local. They need social and spiritual discernment that can be gained only through experience, in a spirit of love for the people and a pattern of mission modeled by the incarnational example of Jesus[21]

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[20] Terry Keith, Pioneer Missionary in Latin America, both in South and Central America, with over 40 years of experience. Director of YWAM Heredia Costa Rica, interview by author, July 6, 2020.

[21] Escobar, *The New Global Mission.* 62.

Even though the Central American evangelical Church is growing, well established, and influential, as stated by several interviewees, many Central American believers and churches still see themselves as the mission field, not missionary-sending nations. It's no wonder that if the Church lacks a vision and culture for missions, the family will lack this as well.

It should be no surprise that significant similarity is found in the responses to the two questions posed in the interview. When the answers are the same to both questions, what is said in response to the first question is not repeated. Only additional information pertinent to the context of the question at hand is given. Additionally, as stated on page 98, in the conclusions from the data analysis section, for the second question, there was a three-way tie for the third most common answer, with each scoring twelve. For this reason, the top five responses are given.

1. There Is a Lack of Finances (29 responses). Lack of finances ranked nearly as high as in the first question. In addition to what has already been said, the difference here is that it focuses more on the lack of a long-term support system. Forrero stated, "I believe that a large percentage of Latino workers fail to stay on the field or even go out to the Mission field because the culture of offering for missions is missing and is generally not intended for long-term."[22] Edgar Chavez responded similarly. "I believe one of the great challenges for missionaries to stay on the field is the lack of logistical structures for member care. There is a need to teach the Church how to care for the missionary in a cross-cultural environment. There is inconsistency in

[22] Cesar Forrero, Author, Former YWAM staff, Former director Cooperación Misionera Panameña, Pastor at Centro de Restuaracion Familiar Nueva Vida and Director of Infusion Ministries Latin America, interview by author, July 4, 2020.

missionary support, which leads to feelings of abandonment."[23] Trying to approach this from the missionary's responsibility, American missionary Aaryn Hauptman, YWAM frontier missions' trainer serving in Nicaragua, remarked,

> There is a lack of understanding and equipping for raising and maintaining finances while on the field. We have to train them how to maintain communications with their supporters and church once on the mission field. We also need to teach them how to maintain healthy supporter relationships. The goal isn't just to get them there; it's to keep them there, fully equipped for the task.[24]

This research reveals the challenge of motivating local churches to support the missionaries they send. They often give their blessing but not their money. This lack of understanding in the Church can lead Central Americans to either leave the field or to look for support from the Global North. This is the case for many Central American YWAM staff, with them primarily receiving their sustenance from North American Christians and churches.

2. The Missionary Lacks Vision and Commitment (19 responses). In contrast to the second highest category in the first question, which placed a lack of vision and commitment on the Church, this time, the weight is placed squarely on the missionary. Alaya opined, "The new generations do not have a commitment mentality and easily jump from one place to another."[25] YWAM Nicaraguan missionary Rene Amador echoed the same sentiment. "The third challenge for me is the lack of commitment of the missionary himself. We think God calls us to something temporary, for two to five years maximum. I've already served the Lord enough, so now that I

[23] Edgar Chavez, Missionary trainer and former Director YWAM Central America, interview by author, July 7, 2020.

[24] Aaryn Hauptman: Frontier Missions Team for YWAM Central America and YWAM SST leader, interview by author, July 4, 2020.

[25] Susy Alaya de Alhberg: Co-director YWAM Anitgua Guatemala, interview by author, July 4, 2020.

have a family, I have to leave the mission field, or I need to leave to start a family."[26] Migdalia Amador Sanchez, his wife and co-director of YWAM Bluefieds Nicaragua added, "The thought that everything is easy. Many come to the mission thinking that everything is easy, and when the challenges come or if they have to work hard, they get discouraged. There is a need for dependence on God in all areas of their lives: mental, emotional, spiritual, and the continuous plan of the Holy Spirit."[27]

With its emphasis on youth, YWAM receives many young missionary candidates who are undecided. They are still exploring what they want to do with their lives, so they have never truly counted the cost. Others come into the mission with a fantasy about what missions is or are just looking for adventure. In the training process, character problems are often discovered, and a reality check comes into play, revealing true motives.

3. There Is a lack of Missionary Vision, Culture, and Commitment in the Local Church (12 responses). This answer is similar to the second-most given response in the first question. It stands to reason that the lack of vision preventing missionaries from going into missions would also hinder them from staying on the field. It is revealing to add the words of Tejada when referring to the lack of missionary vision and commitment in the Church and why the Church loses interest:

> The Church does not organize to take care of the missionary.... There is no basic structure or department established to care for the missionary… no planned prayer, money collection system, or reports on what the missionary worker is doing. There is no distance mentoring or spiritual and psychological care happening. There are no short-term missionary teams scheduled to go and encourage the workers on the field or special support projects planned to aid them. There is no connection or

[26] Rene Amador, Director of YWAM Bluefields, Nicaragua, interview by author, July 6, 2020.

[27] Migdalia Amador Sanchez, Co-director YWAM Nicaragua, Bluefields, interview by author, July 4, 2020.

relationship with the Church to the fruit that is occurring on the field. There is no committee to represent the missionary on the field, to promote the ministry, and to strengthen the missionary and mission long-term.[28]

4. There Is a Lack of Training (12 responses). There is a lack of missionary training and testing before going on the field, plus a lack of ongoing training once on the field. Colombian Missionary Pastor in Panama Diego Betancur expressed, "the need to have some sort of process to see if the missionary candidate has been properly trained before leaving."[29] This was an interesting obstacle listed, and he did not expound on what this would entail or look like. Along these same lines, waxing philosophical Costa Rican missionary Carlos Gomez said, "…character problems; fissures in the soul are the greatest obstacle."[30]

It is undoubtedly in the best interest of the local Church and the mission training agency to send only candidates who show correct character, capacity, and commitment to the mission. Sometimes, those who look solid in their home culture and church do not do well once tested on the field.

5. Relationship Problems (12 responses). These are unhealthy relationships or conflicts in the family between fellow workers, with the Church, or with the mission agency**.** With relationship problems, a correlation can be seen with the character problems previously mentioned. It was interesting that of interviewees who mentioned this in their top three, all but one is or has had cross-cultural experience working in the field. Carlos Gomez described the

[28] Alex Tejada, Southern Baptist Pastor, Panama City, interview by author, July 7, 2020.

[29] Diego Betancur, Mission's Pastor Crossroads Bible Church, Panama City. interview by author, July 4, 2020.

[30] Carlos Gomez: Director of Panameños Alcanzando el Mundo. PAAM, interview by author July 6, 2020.

problem this way, “Problems in relationships with other team members: relationship conflicts due to different personality styles, leadership or cultural differences between team members.”[31] Sinfontes added, “Relationships… struggles relating to other cultures, generating conflicts. Often, when on the field, the missionary finds it difficult and doesn’t know how to navigate or manage his emotions, creating conflict in their marriage and with the team. The challenge is the development of emotional and social intelligence.”[32]

Two interviewees specifically addressed the problem of singles leaving the field due to getting married. Carol Chavez expressed it this way,

> Over the many years that I have been in missions in Central America, I have seen this happen many times. The Central American guy or girl who has a call of missions on their life will find a foreigner they pursue and get married. If that person does not have the same calling as they do, the other person will pull them out of missions, then they go to their spouse's country, become residents there, and their call to missions is put on the back burner.[33]

Rene Amador responded, “One of the obstacles I see is that the Central American sees missions more as an opportunity than a call. It is a chance to go out and form a better life, marry someone with good financial support, and then leave the field. I have seen many young people doing this, thus putting aside the call that God gave them."[34]

Years ago, a young Panamanian woman trained in YWAM Panama, where I led. She continued her studies with the Costa Rican Evangelical Missionary Federation (FEDEMEC) and Wycliffe. She later joined a team and eventually became the team leader working in a closed

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[31] Carlos Gomez: Director of Panameños Alcanzando el Mundo. PAAM, interview by author July 6, 2020.

[32] Pedro Sinfontes director of Director of Liderazgo Creativo, Business and BAM coach. Interview by author, July 6, 2020.

[33] Carol Chavez, Pioneer in YWAM Central America, former Co-director of YWAM Guatemala City, YWAM Central America elder, currently on staff at YWAM San Jose, Costa Rica, interview by author, July 6, 2020.

[34] Rene Amador, Director of YWAM Bluefields, Nicaragua, interview by author, July 6, 2020.

nation in North Africa, where she served for four years. She had a definite missionary call and great character. At the same time, she had this strong desire to get married. A man with a supposed heart for missions from the USA pursued her. They married, and afterward, her spouse pressured her to leave the field. She later regretted and lamented this, but it was too late. This left her pastor and Church disillusioned and reluctant to support future missionaries.

Additional Analysis and Concluding Thoughts

There was no great surprise by the principal obstacles discovered in this research, but in the interviews, what was surprising were some of the underlying roots to the obstacles. For example, after working for many years with churches in Central America, it was not difficult to see that missionary vision and culture were lacking in local churches, but I had not linked it to early missionary endeavors that brought the Gospel to the region. The evidence from the interviews gave indication that missionary DNA was not instilled in many Central American churches and denominations when they were planted in region.

The lack of finances and missionary vision in the Church were prominent obstacles given in response for both questions. The research showed that the lack of finances for missions was not so much due to a lack of finances in the Church. It had more to do with a poverty mentality and how the church and people perceive themselves and what the value. If the church and people perceive themselves as a mission field and inferior and place their value only local growth, they will not feel the call or responsibility to train and mobilize their church members into cross-cultural missions.

Family ties and expectations were the third most identified obstacles for why Central American missionary candidates do not go into missions. Adding weight to this response, nine

interviewees gave the same answer for the second question. Again, the interviews not only revealed the what, but also the why family ties and expectations are such strong obstacles to going into missions. It's not enough to say, just get over it and be committed. Solutions are needed.

Additionally, it is worth mentioning that although not in the top three for the first question asked, "lack of training," with 16 responses, came in a solid fourth place. This corresponds with "lack of training" being one of the top reason why Central American missionaries do not stay on the field as well. This is noteworthy, considering a crucial part of the thesis question asks how YWAM and the UofN can better train Central Americans for missions. Training is needed, but what would this look like, and what elements are needed in the Central American context?

In each of the above responses, the primary obstacle is placed outside the missionary or potential missionary. These obstacles are found in the institutions, environment, culture, and people surrounding the potential missionary. In contrast, when asked what the most significant barrier preventing missionaries from staying on the field is, two of the top given answers placed the obstacle as flaws in the missionary's character and inner life. The number two spot was the missionary's lack of vision and commitment, followed by relationship problems.

In summary, the top primary hindrances and obstacles preventing the mobilization and long-term sustainability of Central Americans into world missions have been identified. These give a framework to the problem and aid in answering the "why" question. Here are a few examples.

1. The missionaries who brought the gospel to Central America did not plant missionary DNA in the Church.

2. Central American churches see themselves as a mission field and not as mission-sending nations.
3. There is a lack of mission history or stories of Latin American missions taught in the Church.
4. The Central American Church has a poverty mentality.
5. There is a dependency and a tendency for the Church to look primarily for support and help from North America.
6. The cultural system relies on the children to provide for their elderly parents.
7. Most Central American Christians do not recognize missions as a viable career.
8. There is a lack of missions training for both the missionary and the Church.

Focus Groups

To further enrich the qualitative research, three focus groups at YWAM's Central America regional conference were conducted. The advantage of this is, first, whereas North Americans generally speak for themselves, Latinos are more comfortable when discussing and processing topics in groups. Second, with a better understanding of the obstacles and the "why" of the problem, it was time to move on to the original thesis. How can YWAM see an increase of Central Americans trained through UofN courses, mobilized, and sustained into global missions?

Prior to the discussion groups, the findings from the semi-structured interviews were presented to the entire assembly. The participants, all active staff serving in Central America, were then divided into three discussion groups. The groups were divided by the top three responses of the qualitative study. Group One: The lack of finances, Group Two: The lack of missionary vision and culture in the Church, Group Three: Family ties and expectations.

Participation in each group was self-selected according to the response that most interested them. A qualified moderator was briefed and assigned to each group, with a set of questions given for the discussion. A person was assigned to take notes, and each discussion group was recorded for further analysis. Once the discussions had finished, each group reported their findings and key points to the larger assembly, which generated additional observations, comments, and questions. The group studies were conducted in Spanish, and the relevant content was translated into English for this thesis-project.

Focus Group Topics, Discussion Instructions and Questions

In a group discussion, we often discover ideas and answers that escape us when we try to solve a problem alone. In your group, discuss the following questions. The questions are divided according to the three categories given in the presentation. After the discussion, each group will have an opportunity to report and share some key highlights. Each group discussion will also be recorded for further data analysis. Thank you.

Lack of Finances

1. What is your staff's income source, and where does it come from?
2. How do you help your staff raise support and keep their supporters committed to supporting them?
3. Do you see Business as Missions (BAM) as a potential for not only entering into unreached people groups but also as a possible source of income?
4. How many of your staff or sent missionaries are involved in BAM? What have been the impact and challenges?

5. In your opinion, how can we, as a mission, better help our staff raise and maintain finances?

Lack of Missionary Vision, Culture and Commitment in the Church

1. How has your YWAM ministry worked with the churches to project and build a vision for missions?
2. What are some of the challenges and obstacles you have encountered in doing this?
3. What are some of the ways in which you have been successful?
4. In your opinion, how can we, as a mission, better help churches create a vision and culture of missions in the Central America region?

Family ties and expectations

1. In your location, in what way have family ties been a challenge for the missionary candidate to enter missions?
2. How have you been able to help the missionary candidate navigate this? How have you helped them mitigate these family expectations?
3. What have you done as a ministry to disciple families about the legitimacy and value of their son/daughter entering full-time missions?
4. In your opinion, how can we, as a mission, better help families send and release their children into missions?

Lack of Finances Analysis

This was the largest group, with twelve participants. Douglas Johnston from the USA, YWAM Central America Frontier Mission Leader; Rebecca Golla, Puerto Rican, YWAM Guatemala Leadership team; Tatiana Pena de Cuxun, Salvadorian, Guatemala Leadership team; Franklin Cuxun, Guatemalan indigenous, YWAM Guatemala Leadership team; Carlos Garcia, Guatemalan, Director YWAM Guatemala City; Joan Simarra, Colombian, YWAM Director Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica; Francisco Garcia, Salvadorian, Director YWAM San Salvador; Rossela Dodero, Costa Rican, Co-Director YWAM Liberia Costa Rica; Barbara Johnson, From the USA, Co-Founder YWAM Nicaragua; Armando Artavia Valverde, Costa Rican, YWAM San José, Costa Rica Leadership Team; Wilson Campos, Costa Rican, YWAM Costa Rican, Leader campus services; and Salla Kurppa Silva, Finish, Co-Director YWAM Nicoya Costa Rica.

What is your staff's income source, and where does it come from?

The most common answer to this question was the United States, with some receiving local support, primarily for specific needs from family, friends, and small businesses. Carlos Garcia, Guatemalan missionary and director of YWAM Guatemala City expressed it this way, "Much of the support comes nationally in the form of gifts in kind, food, gas for the car, etc., not so much financially. Monetary support comes more from abroad."[35] Likewise, Colombian missionary Joan Simarra agreed, "For us, the majority of our support has always been from the United States…The locals tell you that they are going to pray for you, and I hope, I hope that

[35] Carlos Garcia, Director YWAM Guatemala City, Guatemala Finances, focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

they pray because prayer does help."[36] Barbara Johnson, a pioneer American missionary to Nicaragua, gave an encouraging word concerning a Nicaraguan missionary serving in the Middle East. "A lot of knowledge has been raised, and there are some local churches that support her…40% of her support comes from Nicaragua, which is a miracle, but the majority comes from… Europe, and the States."[37] Douglas Johnston, an American missionary to Costa Rica summed up this common struggle:

> Yes, I believe that at the San José base, most staff income comes from abroad. We have seen some churches that can, but they are few.… It is very difficult to change their mentality. If they don't have that vision for missions…I don't mean that they don't have a vision for missions, but the vision they have is often focused on planting churches in Latin America… If you want to be a pastor and plant a denominational church, that's fine, and they are there to support you, but the door closes when a Costa Rican says yes, I want to go to Thailand to plant churches. So, that has been very difficult.[38]

How do you help your staff raise support and keep their supporters committed to supporting them?

A core theme that came out in this section was staff mentoring in the areas of vision identity, calling, commitment, and character of the YWAM missionary. One of the things Salvadorian missionary Francisco Garcia does to raise vision is to share the history of YWAM. "I tell the story of the base, of how we started, that we started from scratch, and how we have reached this point of seeing miracles, seeing God's provision."[39] YWAM Guatemala includes a

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[36] Joan Simarra, Director YWAM Limon, Costa Rica, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

[37] Barbara Johnson, Co-Founder YWAM Nicaragua, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

[38] Douglas Johnston, YWAM Central America Frontier Missions Leader, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

[39] Francisco Garcia, Director YWAM San Salvador, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

three-month intern period for potential missionaries to see if they are genuinely called and committed to missions. Carlos Garcia, to help confirm the calling of God, says to the prospective missionary, "Take these three months and live it because it's going to get difficult…See how it works and talk to others. If after those three months, you hear the voice of God saying he wants you as staff here, we can start walking this through a little more."[40] He continued,

> We began to get a little more into their lives because we see that many of them have never had a parent who taught them how to administrate their time and money…this has helped us in several aspects, getting a little more into the area of character and bringing to them more of a sense of mom and dad, something that they perhaps never had. It's not that they don't want to, it's that they don't know how to do it. So, coaching and walking with them has been a great help in this whole area.[41]

The second was being intentional to give the staff, the communication training and tools needed to raise support and engage with supporters. Training and accountability in communicating with supporters were considered essential throughout the conversation. These are practices as simple as building trust in relationships through regular communication via phone calls, newsletters, etc. Salla Kurppa Silva, a Finish missionary to Costa Rica, shared with the group a new training program that has shown promise at their location in Costa Rica:

> A year and a half ago, we started a staff team development program, which means we train. Our commitment as a base is to train each staff member and provide coaching-type follow-up, not leaving them on their own and giving them knowledge of the tools to use…We have truly seen incredible results…This includes training, but it also includes weekly time where everyone must do something about it, calls, letters, appointments, meetings, and different actions they have learned for support raising.[42]

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[40] Carlos Garcia, Director YWAM Guatemala City, Guatemala Finances, focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[41] Carlos Garcia, Director YWAM Guatemala City, Guatemala Finances, focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[42] Salla Kurppa Silva, Co-Director YWAM Nikoya Costa Rica, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

One last thing to mention in this section is the importance of involving supporters, the local Church, Pastors, parents, and friends with the mission. To this point, Carlos Garcia added, "We ask local supporters to be invited to the base. Bring them in to see what we are doing. Invite them to the children's ministry. Let them come, see, and join in with the staff, ministering and playing with 20 or 30 kids, and it's like, wow, this is what you do! Invite them to get involved in the ministry."[43]

This includes hosting and bringing short-term teams to minister at the YWAM location. Costa Rican missionary Rossela Dodero declared, "As for us, it has also been through the teams, the people who come. Something nice that has happened to us with our staff's support is that some people come and perhaps do not interact directly, but they embrace YWAM, love YWAM, and commit to supporting the staff for a year."[44]

Do you see Business as Missions (BAM) as a potential for not only entering into unreached people groups but also as a possible source of income?

The group did not address the potential of BAM for entering unreached people groups but pretty much kept it in the local setting and as a source of income. For this reason, relevant comments concerning this section will be included in the next question.

[43] Carlos Garcia, Director YWAM Guatemala City, Guatemala Finances, focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[44] Rossela Dodero, Co-Director YWAM Liberia Costa Rica, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

How many of your staff or sent missionaries are involved in BAM? What has been the impact and challenges?

Speaking into the questions concerning BAM, YWAM San Salvador director Francisco Garcia added the desire for the YWAM base to become self-sustaining. "In this sense, we have a lot of fruit; we have different things that the base produces, so only the staff can sell them, and with that, they can also support themselves by doing missions. They sell, and with that, they pay their monthly payments."[45] Barbara Johnson proclaimed that YWAM Diriamba Nicaragua does similar activities:

> Some of our staff have grabbed the idea of making creative t-shirts and selling them… We have a Mexican family who make tacos; others make pupusas, and others are very good at making and selling food and things within the base. We also run bazaars on the property. Everyone knows about our location. We are very busy in business, but it is a ministry. It takes place after the children's ministry or on a Saturday.… Eva, one of our staff… makes t-shirts and other products…She has helped immensely…She does her part, and God does the rest.[46]

Over half of the group participants mentioned some form of microbusiness or self-sustainability for staff support at their location. As mentioned by Rossela Dodero, "We also do self-sustaining within the base because, for Latino singles, it is tough to raise finances, so maybe they build furniture. All of that helps them to be proactive and not just stand there waiting for someone to support them but to use their skills and talents to earn and maintain their monthly finances."[47]

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[45]Francisco Garcia, Director YWAM San Salvador, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

[46] Barbara Johnson, Co-Founder YWAM Nicaragua, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

[47] Rossela Dodero, Co-Director YWAM Liberia Costa Rica, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

This was the second time the difficulty for Latino singles to raise support was brought up. Guatemalan missionary Tatiana Pena Cuxun lamented, "After ten years, I had to get married so the Church would start supporting me. Now they support us."[48] She continued, "Many single staff only get their support from other staff members and small businesses."[49] With this in mind, YWAM's strong emphasis on mobilizing youth, with a large percentage of the staff being single, may partially account for the difficulties in raising support in Central America.

In your opinion, how can we, as a mission, better help our staff raise and maintain finances?

For this section, there was a strong emphasis on the need to intentionally train, coach, and walk alongside the staff with their finances. Kurppa Silva stated, "One thing I feel was key for me was not to leave our missionaries on their own because many times, what we see is, 'Welcome to YWAM. Now, you are going to live by faith. God bless you.' When I came in, no one taught me anything. I didn't know what it was like or what to do."[50] Douglas Johnston nodded in agreement:

> The thing is that we often lack the knowledge of how to be intentional. It's as if we say, 'God bless him or her, God will provide,' but we do not give practical tools. I believe this should be part of our basic training… If we forget those things and focus only on the ministry, it ends up that a year later, the person has to leave and cannot continue because he has a lot of debt. I think this is something we must change.[51]

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[48] Tatiana Pena Cuxun, Guatemala leadership team, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

[49] Tatiana Pena Cuxun, Guatemala leadership team, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

[50] Salla Kurppa Silva, Co-Director YWAM Nikoya Costa Rica, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

[51] Douglas Johnston, YWAM Central America Frontier Missions Leader, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

Several expressed the importance of understanding the biblical worldview in finances. As Tatiana Pena Cuxun shared,

> I believe a challenge for leaders is teaching the biblical worldview of finances…As a Latina, I have already struggled with that because I have a way of thinking but it does not fit with other people, so I have to be aware that concerning finances, I need to have a biblical worldview. We have done some workshops on that, but it takes a while to have an effect.[52]

There was an additional emphasis on culturally appropriate financial stewardship training and expectations. Carlos Garcia shared that because they have Americans, Latinos, and Indigenous serving together on staff at the Guatemala City location, they had to be careful not to have a one-shoe-fits-all mentality. "I feel like we need to bring the training into the culture of the country because sometimes we have all this influence from the U.S. and Europe that we want to implement in our bases, but it will not work. It will only bring frustration."[53]

Lack of Missionary Vision and Culture in the Church Analysis

This group consisted of seven participants. Giacomo Coghi, Costa Rican, Director YWAM San Jose Costa Rica, Regional leader YWAM Central America; Diego Silva, Costa Rican, Co-Director of YWAM Nicoya Costa Rica; Tony Del Rio, Costa Rican, Co-Director YWAM Liberia Costa Rica; Daniel Alvarado, Costa Rican, Leadership team, YWAM Liberia, Costa Rica; Jorge Perea, Panamanian, leadership team YWAM Panama Boquete; Terry Keith from the USA, Co-Director of YWAM Heredia, Costa Rica; Donna Keith from the USA, Co-

[52] Tatiana Pena Cuxun, Guatemala leadership team, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

[53] Carlos Garcia, Director YWAM Guatemala City, Guatemala Finances, focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

Director of YWAM Heredia, Costa Rica; Braunier Santamaria, Costa Rican, Leadership team, YWAM San Jose, Costa Rica.

How has your YWAM ministry worked with the churches to project and build a vision for missions?

The group presented a few ways they have built relationships and missionary vision in the local Church, but most of their efforts have been limited or fell on the side of what they desired or should do. The primary focus was to win over the Pastors. If the Pastors catch the vision, the congregation will follow. Terry Keith long-term American missionary to Costa Rica offered, "We invited the Pastor's associations to breakfast, where we took the opportunity to present different mission options to encourage them, where we give them an opportunity to participate in the way that they can, whether it is sending people financially or doing something in their local church."[54]

Another area was not approaching the Church to get something but simply coming as servants. Costa Rican missionary Tony Del Rio shared, "What has served us well in Liberia in general is to go and introduce ourselves to the local churches and serve them. Here we are, how we can serve you?…I believe service will be the opportunity to show the Church we are good people."[55] A Costa Rican missionary Daniel Alvarado added,

> I believe this is also a way to change the mentality of the Church a little, that we are not only going outside, but that missions also encompass Jerusalem itself. I feel this is involving the Church and working together with them. The truth is that this greatly impacts their way of thinking. We show them that we do not want to steal people from them because that is what the Pastors think, that mission

[54] Terry Keith, Co-Director of YWAM Heredia, Costa Rica, Lack of Missionary Vision and Culture in the Church focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[55] Tony Del Rio, Co-Director YWAM Liberia Costa Rica, Lack of Missionary Vision and Culture in the Church focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

> organizations want to steal the flock, but we show them that we want to work together in expanding the Kingdom of God.

What are some of the challenges and obstacles you have encountered in doing this?

As previously stated, pastors often think that YWAM or other mission organizations come to their Church to steal the sheep. Panamanian missionary Jorge Perea pointed to how mistrust, another obstacle, can form between the local church and mission groups:

> We have taken groups to churches in the past, but it was not something that was sustained over time. So, the Church had the perception that this was not a long-term relationship. So, that created a lot of instability in how the Church saw us because we would go, we would help them in such an event, and we would not appear again until a year later. That then was an obstacle to developing solid relationships with the church.[56]

Donna Keith, a long-term American missionary to Costa Rica, expressed that part of the lack of missionary vision rests on the local Church's self-focus. "I see the Church always trying to build itself to become bigger…they have to go beyond their home and congregation. I honor the churches, the pastors, and those who are teaching their people God's principles, growing them up, and helping their families, but that is often where it ends in the Church. It doesn't go beyond that to a future or something greater." [57]

What are some of the ways in which you have been successful?

Much of what was offered in this section was on the side of what could be done rather than success stories of what had been done. There was one success story shared by Perea that came from partnering consistently with two local churches:

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[56] Jorge Perea, YWAM Panama Boquete Leadership Team, Lack of Missionary Vision and Culture in the Church focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[57] Donna Keith, Co-Director of YWAM Heredia, Costa Rica, Lack of Missionary Vision and Culture in the Church focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

> We began to support certain churches more, more fully, and in a more concrete way. From this, we now have churches that support several of our ministries…For example, we have a ministry that works with refugees, homeless people, and prostitutes, and there is a community church that supports that ministry and provides everything for it.[58]

Perea gave another example of fruit from long-term relationship building, where YWAM has served a city church and their daughter churches:

> Because they knew they could count on us, we were able to change our modality with them. So, now, because they have seen over time that we support them and are not stealing sheep, they see the need to train their members in missions. As the relationship grew, they realized there was a latent need in the Church. So now they see us as allies and a place where they can send their members to be trained.

Perea's example speaks to the next question and gives hope to similar actions that can be taken across the region.

In your opinion, how can we, as a mission, better help churches create a vision and culture of missions in the Central America region?

In this conversation, it became clear that building relationships with pastors is crucial to creating a missional vision and culture in the Church. Costa Rican missionary YWAM Regional leader Giacomo Coghi mentioned an effective strategy in YWAM's beginnings not readily done today. "I believe that one of the ways going forward is to do like we have done in the past, that is to take pastors on mission trips…I believe we are already in a place where we can think about strategies to involve them...This will open their eyes to missions… I believe that the aspect of opening their eyes causes a total change of heart, priorities, and vision."[59]

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[58] Jorge Perea, YWAM Panama Boquete Leadership Team, Lack of Missionary Vision and Culture in the Church focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[59] Giacomo Coghi, Director YWAM San Jose Costa Rica, Regional leader YWAM Central America, Lack of Missionary Vision and Culture in the Church focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

Although it has not led to significant missions involvement on the part of the Church yet, Costa Rican missionary Diego Silva shared how they have been implementing relationships with pastors and churches:

> I see God giving us favor with the pastors in our area…We have been building continuity in our friendship with the pastors, focusing on ten churches. This includes regularly contacting these pastors, supporting their vision, contributing to their programs, providing resources, and inviting them to be involved with YWAM. These have been important steps to building relationships… So now we can say, let's go on a ministry trip, not a missionary trip because they are not ready for that yet, but in reality, it is a missionary trip, where we go out and serve two days, enjoy each other's company, and return. With many of the pastors, I have seen their perspectives change…This strategy is costly and time-consuming, but we have seen great fruit.[60]

This echoes what was previously shared by Perea. While nodding in agreement, Costa Rican missionary Braunier Santamaria shared some of the complications YWAM staff need to be aware of when engaging with the local Church:

> In my experience, this goes hand in hand with what we are seeing. First, if the Church does not see mutual benefit, where both YWAM and the Church receive something, the Church closes the relationship…Last week, I heard a pastor say, 'YWAM makes young people fall in love with YWAM, and when they come to church, they are more in love with YWAM than with the vision of the church itself.'…We need to show the pastor that we love the Church, not that we only love its young people, but that we love their vision and want them to see them grow.[61]

Del Rio excitedly concurred,

> There lies the secret: the local Church needs to see us there, involved and serving, not just showing up for an occasional visit…I think that when we arrive and have that attitude saying, 'How can we help you? What can we do?'… this changes things. From this, a young pastor approached us and said, 'Look, we want to work

[60] Diego Silva, Co-Director YWAM Nikoya Costa Rica, Finance focus group discussion, Guatemala October 16, 2022.

[61] Braunier Santamaria, Leadership team, YWAM San Jose, Costa Rica. Lack of Missionary Vision and Culture in the Church focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

> hand in hand with you. How can we get those kids from that missionary school involved?' With this, we are moving toward the Great Commission.[62]

Coghi concluded,

> When listening to this conversation, what comes to mind is when someone comes to the DTS. We have goals and a strategy. There is a three-month curriculum that results in a field assignment. When thinking about our work with the local Church, what could be our strategy so that three years from now, we see a change? We need to enter with a proven strategy and a plan. The goal is to mobilize the Church. If you look at relationships, perhaps this involves missional youth camps and short-term missionary trips. We need to have a six-month, one-year, two-year, three-year strategy.[63]

As the conversation advanced, it became clear that greater intentionality and a strategy were needed from the various YWAM campuses with the local Churches in their area. This should not be a hit-and-miss strategy but a long-term commitment from YWAM to the churches. YWAM locations accomplish this through training, coaching, and giving individuals the tools to engage with their local church and through YWAM's corporate and ministerial involvement with the Church. Possible solutions will be covered more in-depth in the next chapter.

Family Ties and Expectations

This group had eleven participants. Nilivette Antonia Rosales, Panamanian, Director YWAM Panama Boquete; Karla de Garcia, Guatemalan, Co-Director YWAM Guatemala; Sara Gomez, Guatemalan, veteran YWAM Guatemala Leader; Migdalia Amador Sanchez, Nicaraguan, Co-director YWAM Nicaragua, Bluefields; Judy Guasca de Garcia, Colombian, Co-director YWAM San Salvador, El Salvador; Carol Chavez from the USA, Regional Elder;

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[62] Tony Del Rio, Co-Director YWAM Liberia Costa Rica, Lack of Missionary Vision and Culture in the Church focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[63] Giacomo Coghi, Director YWAM San Jose Costa Rica, Regional leader YWAM Central America, Lack of Missionary Vision and Culture in the Church focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

Gladys Catherine Pierce from the USA, YWAM Panama Boquete, Leadership Team; Don Johnson, American, Co-founder YWAM Diriamba Nicaragua; John Allegretto from the USA, Regional Elder; Elaine Allegretto from the USA, Regional Elder; Steve Golla, From the USA,YWAM Guatemala Leadership Team.

In your location, in what way have family ties been a challenge for the missionary candidate to enter missions?

As soon as this question was given, Guatemalan veteran missionary Sarah Gomez interjected, "I believe that the biggest obstacle for Latinos to go into missions is that the parents are not in agreement. A parent puts you through school and wants you to graduate, work with the hope that you will help them."[64] This conferred with earlier findings. As with the other focus groups, this group was eager to dive into the topic. Nicaraguan missionary Migdalia Amador Sanchez offered one reason for the parent's opposition:

> Something we see, something we have been studying in Bluefields, is that much is due to a lack of understanding of the Word of God. Nowhere in the Bible does it encourage that children have to take care of their parents. Yes, we must honor them, but not take care of them financially and be responsible for them. The Bible exhorts the opposite, that parents are to leave an inheritance to their children.[65]

Judy Guasco, Colombian missionary to El Salvador interjected,

> I think about times past when families had a nun or a priest in the family, and this was something very honorable for the family and they gave it a lot of value. And this is not what happens in the field today, in the Christian environment. So, families don't see it as something to rejoice in but as a waste of time. I think we have also lost seeing missions as a lifelong career. So, the mentality is they can do

[64] Sara Gomez, Veteran YWAM Guatemala Leader, Family Ties and Expectations focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[65] Migdalia Amador Sanchez, Co-director YWAM Nicaragua, Bluefields, Family Ties and Expectations focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

missions in the short term, but when they calm down, and the emotion goes away, they can do something important.[66]

Gladys Pierce, American long-term missionary to Panama added, "They feel the call to missions, but their parents have raised them to take care of them, and this means studying a traditional career. So, they wrestle with this."[67] Speaking to those who come with a call to missions, Steve Golla, American long-tern missionary to Guatemala followed with, "One of the things that is really difficult for those kids that do come is they battle with guilt. 'I am here because God told me, but my parents are asking me to come back, so there is this guilt underneath it all."[68]

Not seeing how a missionary vocation can support their parents in their later years and their family not valuing or seeing missions as a career choice was a common theme in the conversation. Those who obey the call to missions often struggle with the guilt associated with not living up to their parent's expectations and feelings that they have abandoned them. This gives insight as to why family ties and expectations are so strong.

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[66] Judy Guasca de Garcia, Co-director YWAM San Salvador, El Salvador, Family Ties and Expectations focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[67] Gladys Catherine Pierce, American, YWAM Panama Boquete, Leadership Team, Family Ties and Expectations focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[68] Steve Golla, YWAM Guatemala Leadership Team, Family Ties and Expectations focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

How have you been able to help the missionary candidate navigate this? How have you helped them mitigate these family expectations?

This was a challenging topic. The discussion group continued to talk about the challenges, but no actual working models or solutions were offered. It was simply up to the missionary. They had to count the cost and obey their call.

What have you done as a ministry to disciple families about the legitimacy and value of their son/daughter entering full-time missions?

A little more hope was offered to this question, with YWAM Guatemala City having programs engaging adolescents and teenagers in mission-oriented activities, such as their summer of service program Saved to Serve and Transform (SST). The SST has helped to disciple youth concerning missions but has not changed the hearts of the parents towards releasing their adult children into long-term missions. Referring to the SST, Guatemalan missionary Karla Garcia lamented, "It's not enough. They will let them go for three weeks but have other plans for them for the rest of their lives."[69]

Another positive note is that once they complete the SST, many parents let their adult children enter YWAM's six-month Discipleship Training School (DTS), which includes a three-month cross-cultural outreach. Speaking of the DTS, Steve Golla shared, "The selling point I've noticed with the DTS… for the parents is that their kids are going to travel and see the world… and they tell their friends, you know my child went to Morocco. The parents have the impression

[69] Karla de Garcia, Guatemalan, Co-Director YWAM Guatemala, Family Ties and Expectations focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

that their child is doing something. They are proud of their kids, but it stops right there because they have to go back and live in the real world."[70]

The SST is offered in Nicaragua and, more recently, in Panama as well. Although, as mentioned, there has not been any immediate fruit in families releasing their children into full-time missions, there is hope that the youth participating today will one day be the parents of tomorrow releasing their children into missions.

In your opinion, how can we, as a mission, better help families send and release their children into missions?

After listening to each of the challenges and obstacles, when asked what is needed, American missionary Elaine Allegretto exclaimed, "A visitation from Jesus!"[71] This may seem humorous, but that is one of the possible solutions. Concentrated prayer for families is needed, especially for parents to understand God's missionary heart and what that means for them as a family. With this, the primary discussion centered around the need to disciple families according to the Biblical model and help them understand that children are gifts from God.

One suggestion by Steve Golla was for every YWAM staff member to adopt a family to build the relational bridges needed to disciple them in the area of missions. For him, this was an eighteen-year process with one family. "I think part of the process is how many families we adopt personally. One of the things I have seen in our mission is to focus on a specific family and spend time with them. They began to see and act on the things they learned…Over time, the

[70] Steve Golla, YWAM Guatemala Leadership Team, Family Ties and Expectations focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

[71] Elaine Allegretto, American Regional Elder, Family Ties and Expectations focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

women began to get involved with the YWAM location… She did not do a DTS but later sent her two sons to the DTS."[72]

Doing the DTS is great and a step forward, but as Steve Golla expressed, "that is the part where we need that bridge in between finishing the DTS and determining if this is the call of God for them." Several locations have made progress in getting young people into the DTS, but as seen in the survey, even if you include Central American graduates from all UofN courses, only twenty-two percent go on to serve with YWAM long-term.

This discussion group had the longest transcript out of the three, but the conversation kept going back to lamenting the problem and did not produce easy answers or a clear way forward. It is common for parents to be reluctant for their children to enter missions. Society's definition of success typically does not include a missionary career, and good parents want their children to be safe and live near them. The noted difference was the deep emotional weight of responsibility towards supporting the parents expressed by the Latinos in the group. The family dynamics and cultural context gave evidence to the difficult task ahead of finding solutions to mobilize missionaries from Central American families.

Concluding Thoughts

The three group discussions exceeded expectations, not only in the content revealed but also in the passion with which the participants engaged with the problems to be solved. and with each other. It was evident that problems were relevant to the region, and the groups had a

[72] Steve Golla, YWAM Guatemala Leadership Team, Family Ties and Expectations focus group discussion, Guatemala, October 16, 2022.

tangible desire to find solutions. The conclusion for this section, along with possible solutions and proposed actions, will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

How can YWAM see an increase of Central Americans trained through the University of the Nations courses, mobilized, and sustained into full-time staff and global missions? The survey and semi-structured interviews, as outlined in Chapter Four, clearly identified the primary obstacles and hindrances impeding Central Americans from entering their call to missions.

Additionally, the three group discussions gave needed insights into possible solutions to the problem. From the research, it became evident that the underlying need was for better coaching, equipping, and training for the local church, the missionary's family, and the missionary. In response to this research, the following recommendations have been developed and will be submitted to YWAM Central American regional leaders, the UofN Dean of Christian Ministries and Provost office. There is a need for greater engagement with the local Church, a need for member and family care, and contextualized YWAM missionary candidate and staff training for Central Americans. Each is outlined in greater detail in the following sections.

Recommendation One: Intentional Engagement With the Local Church

YWAM campuses, ministries, and their staff need to be more intentional in building relationships and trust with local churches in each nation. This could be done by intentionally investing time in individuals and formally serving with the church in local ministry partnerships

and outreaches. As these relationships grow, the local YWAM campuses and ministries will gain trust, with the opportunity to bring greater mission awareness to the congregations.

With pastors being vital in influencing their congregations, the goal would be for YWAM staff and teams to serve alongside pastors in their local concerns and bring them into God's heart for the unreached beyond their borders. This is not a short-term fix, but in time, these efforts would aid in growing missionary vision and culture in the pastor and the congregation. Once the relationship is established, YWAM leaders and staff may have the opportunity to lead mission services, workshops, and conferences in and with the churches. From relationships and trust built, Pastors and church leaders could be invited to cross-cultural short-term outreaches. Once mission vision is embraced and put into practice, the fruit would be a greater understanding of the responsibility to send, pray, and support missionaries from their church and region.

I have an example from my own experience of the need to involve pastors and leaders from the churches on short-term mission trips. In 1999, I was invited to speak on short-term missions at an interdenominational missions conference held at an Assembly of God Church in Panama City, Panama. There were about 300 people in attendance. A prominent North American veteran missionary serving in Central America spoke right before me. His message argued why there was no need for short-term missions, and his premise was that the money spent on short-term missions could be better invested into long-term missionary endeavors.

I was young and new in the region, and it was my first time speaking at a missions conference. Nervously, walking up to the podium, I asked God how to respond to this message, and he gave me a strategy. Opening the talk, I asked the workshop participants to raise their hands if they felt a call to missions. Everyone in the auditorium raised their hand. I then asked them how many had gone on a short-term mission trip before receiving their missionary call;

again, nearly everyone raised their hand. I asked a third question: how many of you in this room felt a call to missions before going on a short-term mission trip? Only two in attendance raised their hand.

Following this, as a model for short-term missions, I read the account of Jesus sending out the 72 in Luke 10:1-20, which contains the elements of an orientation prior to going on the short-term missionary outing with instruction on what to and not to do, the practical missionary experience and a time for debriefing at the end. My premise was that short-term mission trips are like marketing, where one allows a person or church group to taste, see, and experience what missions is. The message concluded that the money donated for short-term missions often comes from a different motivation and would not normally go to long-term missions. However, those participating in a short-term mission trip are more apt to pray for missionaries, support missions, and perhaps become missionaries. Referring to Luke 12:34, if a person has God's heart for missions, they will invest their treasure there as well.

Another area that became evident through the research is the need to disciple children and youth in missions. The earlier mentioned SST program in Guatemala has shown effectiveness in introducing missions to churches and families. Other existing YWAM youth ministry models operating in other parts of the world, such as Kings Kids and Mission Adventures, may prove beneficial as well. Kings Kids is an international movement embracing a kingdom lifestyle that is family-based and generationally linked. They aim to mobilize, equip, reach out, and care for children, youth, and families, knowing God, bringing Him joy, and making Him and His Kingdom known.[1] By incorporating a robust missional focus in the Kings

[1] "Kings Kids, Who We Are." *Kings Kids International*. Last modified 2024. Accessed January 13, 2024. https://kki.global/who-we-are/ministry-description/.

Kids program, not only would the children receive discipleship in missions, but the parents as well. There have been on-and-off expressions of Kings Kids offered in YWAM Central America locations, but greater intentionality and long-term consistency are needed to impact the local church.

In a similar way, Mission Adventures has had a significant impact in moving local churches towards missions in North America. "Mission Adventures is a full-service short-term Outreach Ministry for groups."[2] Whereas many youth-focused mission training and outreach programs are comprised of youth from many different places coming together for the experience, Mission Adventures is group-based, with everyone coming from the same local church. In Mission Adventures, the pastor or youth pastor of the church and chaperoning parents come on the outreach. There is spiritual discipleship in the training camp portion of the program, where the team is equipped by experienced missionaries to share their faith cross-culturally. By operating in this way, the mission impact occurs not only with those who have done the outreach but also in the church when the team returns home and shares their experience.

Mission Adventures, like Kings Kids, offer great flexibility and are designed to operate within the cultural context and needs of the location offering the program. Outside of two Mission Adventure camps run in the early 2000s in Panama for nationals, Central America has only received Mission Adventure outreaches from camps from the USA. There is great potential to disciple local churches in missions if YWAM regularly runs Mission Adventure camps and outreaches in partnership with local churches throughout Central America.

[2] "Mission Adventures," *Mission Adventures*, accessed January 13, 2024, https://missionadventures.net/.

Recommendation Two: Member and Family Care

Member care is not a new concept but is relatively new to YWAM Central America. Typically, the primary focus of member care is the missionary on the field.[3] For Central America, it would be good to expand this to multifaceted care focusing not only on the missionary and their family on the field but on their parents and sending churches as well. This may seem like a huge undertaking, but like the youth ministry example above, partnerships could be formed with YWAM staff and the local church, giving member care to the missionaries and their parents back home. This could help create ownership and an understanding that the mission is the responsibility of all involved.

When specifically addressing the challenge of family ties, in most cases, the families of possible missionary candidates have some involvement with the local church. If the pastor and churches are won over, the families can also be won. Alongside this, discipleship and training for the families need to take place. This way, the responsibility would not only be placed on the missionary candidate but also on the YWAM staff assigned to walk alongside the potential candidate and his family. Central Americans are relational and family-minded. They need to be welcomed into the YWAM family. Once this happens, over time, trust will grow, giving opportunity for discipleship into God's Word and his missional heart. As mentioned above, the next step would be to invite pastors, family, and church members to a short-term outreach with the missionary on the field.

[3] Member Care addresses all aspects of a missionary's personality, spiritual, emotional and relational, their physical and economic well-being, both singles, couples, families and children, and is developmental and educational. It seeks to empower missionaries to make healthy choices by offering ongoing training, resourcing and equipping in all these areas. It is integral to all aspects of mission, leadership (for/by), logistics, spiritual formation, and church life. It begins with selection and continues throughout the missionary life cycle to re-entry or retirement. https://globalmembercare.com

One further and maybe radical step could be placing the responsibility to care for parents into the missionary candidate's support raising strategy and plan. This could help relieve the candidate's guilt and help the parents see their child and YWAM as allies and not against them.

Recommendation Three: Contextualized YWAM Missionary Staff Training

Missionary training for Central American YWAM staff that addresses the specific context and obstacles discovered in this research is needed. This is perhaps the most extensive of the three recommendations. As the survey showed, YWAM bases have done an excellent job of making the DTS available in every Central American nation. Post-DTS courses are offered at YWAM Panama Boquete, YWAM San Jose, YWAM Heredia, Cost Rica, and YWAM Diriamba, Nicaragua. Still, these courses are often disconnected and do not easily lead to an accessible comprehensive degree track with UofN. Addtionally, YWAM training is good in quality but is often not seen as a serious higher education path by Central American parents and the church. A training and educational model that leads to a degree that would allow the students to train while actively serving in a missions role with YWAM is needed. This would give immediate real-life missionary application to what the students learn.

Before doing this Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) program with GCTS, I participated in and graduated with an Executive Master of Arts in Global Pioneering Leadership (ExecMAL) with the UofN in 2015. I have since helped lead a second ExecMAL that graduated 36 candidates from 30 nations in December 2022. I am currently working with the 2024 ExecMAL. Like the D.Min program at GCTS, the ExecMAL program was created to equip candidates with their understanding of pioneering in this global multicultural era, while they continue to be actively engaged in serving others through the ministry roles they have on the field. It is a 24-month

program with five two-week on-site intensives held in different locations around the world. The ExecMAL includes rigorous pre- and post-intensive assignments and a capstone thesis-project. Each candidate learns through various assignments, including public Bible readings, leadership journals, research papers, and integration reflections. The cohort dynamic enhances discovery and growth as the candidates learn from one another.[4]

The ExecMAL program is highly successful, but with the prerequisites including a bachelor's degree and five years of active YWAM senior leadership service, it is out of reach for entry-level Central American YWAM staff. During this thesis-project's research and analysis phase, it became clear that a possible answer to the obstacles discovered, was for YWAM and the UofN to develop a similar training and educational track at the missionary candidate entry level in Central America. Like the ExecMAL, it is recommended that a similar long-term cohortative degree learning process be developed, that allows YWAM Central American missionaries to enter and remain on the field while gaining the necessary knowledge and skills needed.

What are some of the reasons this type of missionary training and education model could be helpful for Central American YWAM staff?

1. Currently, there is no systematic way or clear pre-determined long-term track available to students in the UofN. The system is more geared toward the student mapping out their degree plan with counsel from an advisor and then trying to attend the various courses required through the UofN campus worldwide.
2. Many courses needed are not easily available to Central Americans or are unavailable in Spanish.

[4] "Master's degrees in the UofN," *UofN*, accessed January 17, 2024, https://uofn.edu/news/masters.

3. Although some existing courses would help fulfill some elements of the desired outcomes, they are disjointed from one another, and many gaps would need to be filled.
4. The current course offerings with the UofN are not tailored to meet many of the actual needs discovered in this study and encountered on the ground in Central America.
5. A cohort training model would be more conducive to Latin American group culture, where the students form relational bonds and encourage and walk through the study process together.
6. Assignments and internships could be incorporated with the local church, thus helping to build better relationships and missional culture in the Central American Church.
7. If formalized, into a UofN degree program, parents and the church would be more apt to accept it as a serious vocational path.
8. The relational dynamics of the cohortative model with possible course intensives held in various YWAM/UofN campuses throughout Central America could create an incredible opportunity for missional networking and partnerships.

Training and Educational Elements Needed

At its core, the role of the family is the creation mandate found in Genesis 1:28 and 2:15. In God's original design, families are called to be fruitful and faithful stewards, multiplying the shalom of God throughout the earth. In this recommendation, the students would need to learn that the missional mandate runs from Genesis to Revelations. From this, the students would gain an understanding that as part of this global family, they are God's junior partners called to steward and co-create with him. They would learn that the privilege, purpose, and responsibility of God's missional call is not theirs alone but also belongs to their family and the local church.

Along with this, students could be given an opportunity to acquire the relational insights and support-raising tools that would enable them to better engage with their family and the local church, bringing them into partnership with their call from God.

Another aspect needed would be for the student's vision to be expanded to see the world through God's eyes, where they could gain a better understanding of who he is by how he is reflected and moving through the global family of God in the multicultural tapestry of the nations. The goal would be for their passion for the nations to grow as they capture his heart and see the fingerprints and signposts, he has left in unreached people groups. They should also be equipped with tools to help bring God's Word to those who do not have the Bible in their mother tongue and learn the principles and skills needed to share the Gospel in a cross-cultural context.

It would be important to include an understanding of worldview and the seven spheres of societal influence, where the students would capture God's heart, compassion, and solutions for the spectrum of human problems. In the training, they should be given an opportunity to grapple with questions like: What are the root causes of these problems? Why is community development significant? Do nations and people groups have a distinct calling and purpose? What does it mean to disciple nations? Through this, they could discover God's perspective and principles to develop innovative solutions to these problems for individuals, families, communities, and nations.

Along with the formal training, it is recommended that the students be given an opportunity to apply what they have learned in internships. The internships could be done in partnership with their local church and long-term workers on the field in the area of the student's interest and calling. Possible internships could be done amongst unreached peoples, Bible

translation and engagement projects, with church planting endeavors, or community development projects.

Additionally, it would be important to design the training so that it develops emerging multicultural leaders who will carry YWAM into the future. This could be done by engaging the students with YWAM's story, history, values, and DNA. This would help the students discover principles to avoid mission drift and stay mission true.

Finally, it is recommended that the training concludes with a capstone field-based project that would give the students an opportunity to learn how to define a God-given vision, plan for its implementation, and prepare for the action steps necessary to turn the vision into reality. For the project, the students would be given a chance to integrate what they have learned from their training, life, and ministry experiences. It is recommended that the project be integrated into the corporate vision of the YWAM ministry where students serve and in cooperation with their local church and ministry partners.

Conclusion

This thesis-project aimed for YWAM to find possible solutions to see an increase in Central Americans trained through the University of the Nations courses, mobilized, and sustained as full-time staff in global missions. The research showed that there were no quick answers or short-term solutions. There was a need to break free from the barriers defined by the obstacles discovered. Through many hours of research, contemplation, and prayer, a long-term, multifaceted approach began to take shape. Greater intentionality, new contextualized training opportunities are needed. In response to this, I have created an overview of a possible Executive

Bachelor Arts in Missions degree pilot program that would need be developed in collaboration with the UofN Dean of Christian Ministries and Provost. This can be seen in Appendix B.

Loren Cunningham, Founder of Youth With A Mission, graduated to heaven on October 6th, 2023. He left an example of radical faith and a legacy for the mission to follow.

> Loren was first person in history to travel for the sake of Christ and the Great Commission to every sovereign nation on earth, all dependent countries, and more than 100 territories… Loren is often called the "de-regulator of missions" because he broke the 1960s missionary paradigm by creating opportunities for Youth to serve short-term, globally, and unsalaried. This foresight opened the floodgates so that millions could come FROM everywhere and go TO everywhere as missionaries around the globe to proclaim the truth of God and display His love.[5]

The passion for missions in those interviewed, the discoveries encountered in the research, and the three recommendations outlined in this chapter give hope for the floodgates in Central America to open, to see our Central American brothers and sisters join the global missionary movement, going from everywhere to everywhere displaying and proclaiming the love and truth of God to a hurting world.

> We often hear about "thinking outside the box." But what if you lived outside the box? Many people never live their mission. Their lives are spent appeasing their enemies and living within their walls. Will you waste hours, days, years, or more of your life to please your enemies? Or will you live beyond the world's boundaries in the mission you were made for?[6]

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[5] YWAM Kona, "Loren Is with Jesus," *LorenCunningham.Com*, accessed January 20, 2024, https://lorencunningham.com/loren-is-with-jesus.

[6] Loren Cunningham and Jeff Rogers, *No Boundaries Within God's Will* (Seattle, Washington: YWAM Publishing, 2023) 60.

APPENDIX A

YWAM CENTRAL AMERICAN CAMPUS LEADER SURVEY

To accurately measure the reality of where YWAM currently stands in its training and staff retention and mobilization of Central Americans, the following survey was completed on Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com). The questions were sent out to the fifteen YWAM training campus directors offering University of the Nations (UofN) courses in Central America. The breakdown and number of the YWAM campuses surveyed are as follows: Panama one, Costa Rica five, Nicaragua three, Honduras one, and Guatemala three. At each location, the YWAM campus director completed the survey, which resulted in 100% completion responses. Both the questions and answers were completed in Spanish. They have been translated to English for this appendix.

Respondent 1: YWAM Boquete Panama

- Started: Monday, November 07, 2022 9:33:01 PM
- Last Modified: Monday, November 07, 2022 10:10:43 PM
- Time Spent: 00:37:41

Q1 Name? Nilivette Rosales

Q2 Age? 32

Q3 Nationality? Panamanian

Q4 In which country are you serving? Panama

Q5 What is your function or position? Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 2 years and 4 months

Q7 How many of your Central American staff members are currently serving full-time at your base? 12

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 3

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? Mauritania and Belize

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 3 - 5 years

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 5

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 6

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 0

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-enterprises, etc.

1. U.S. church
2. Friends/connections in the U.S.
3. Family

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 10%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Lack of commitment

2. Lack of financial support
3. Family pressure/family situations

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct Discipleship Training School (DTS) at your location? 3

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in DTS in your locality? 141

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Word of mouth

Q20 What post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer?

1. Discipleship Bible School
2. School of Leadership and Ministry Development
3. School of Strategic Missions

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? More than 4 per year

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 26-30%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes, please, thank you.

Respondent 2: YWAM Heredia Costa Rica

- Started: Tuesday, November 08, 2022 7:53:37 AM
- Last Modified: Tuesday, November 08, 2022 8:14:51 AM
- Time Spent: 00:21:13

Q1 Name? Terry Keith

Q2 Age? 71

Q3 Nationality? USA

Q4 In which country are you serving? Costa Rica

Q5 What is your function or position? Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 17

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full-time at your base? 12

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 10

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? Taiwan, Kenya, Malawi, Malawi, Mexico, USA, Costa Rica

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 1 - 2 years

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 5

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 4

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 0

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-enterprises etc.

1. Families
2. Friends
3. Foreign churches

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 10%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Finances
2. Family
3. Interpersonal conflicts

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) at your location? Usually once but sometimes 2 times

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in DTS in your locality? 20

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Website

Q 20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer?

1. School of Sustainable Development
2. School of Leadership and Ministry Development
3. Seminars

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 10

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 21-25%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes, please.

Respondent #3: YWAM Nicoya Costa Rica

- Started: Tuesday, November 08, 2022 2:38:46 PM
- Last Modified: Tuesday, November 08, 2022 2:44:46 PM
- Time Spent: 00:05:59

Q1 Name? Salla Kurppa-Silva

Q2 Age? 44

Q3 Nationality? Finnish

Q4 In which country are you serving? Costa Rica

Q5 What is your function or position? Co-Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 11

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full time at your base? 2

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 1

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? Latvia and in two years they are going to Turkey.

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 3 - 5 years

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 2

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 1

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 1

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-enterprises etc.

1. Friends
2. Family
3. Churches

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 30%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Finance
2. Family pressure
3. Personal goals

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) in your locality? 1

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in DTS in your locality? 20

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Word of mouth

Additional comments: 4)word of mouth 3)website 2)social networking 1) conferences and events.

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer? 0

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 0

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 21-25%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes.

Respondent # 4: YWAM Tegucigalpa Honduras

- Started: Tuesday, November 08, 2022 2:55:03 PM
- Last Modified: Tuesday, November 08, 2022 3:00:27 PM
- Time Spent: 00:05:23

Name? Laura Gonzalez

Q2 Age? 43

Q3 Nationality? Colombian

Q4 In which country are you serving? Honduras

Q5 What is your function or position? Co-Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 7

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full time at your base? 1

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 0

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? 0

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 1 - 2 years

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 0

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 0

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 0

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-enterprises etc.

1. Family
2. Friends
3. Outside work

Q15 Approximately what percentage of the support of your Central American staff comes from Central America? 20%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Finances
2. Family
3. Lack of commitment to the call

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) in your locality? 1

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in DTS in your locality? 9

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Word of mouth

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer? 0

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 0

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 1-5%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? The respondent skipped this question.

Respondent #5: YWAM San Miguel Chicaj Guatemala

- Started: Tuesday, November 08, 2022 4:17:44 PM
- Last Modified: Tuesday, November 08, 2022 4:29:54 PM
- Time Spent: 00:12:10

Q1 Name? Kathi Archer

Q2 Age? 63

Q3 Nationality? USA

Q4 In which country are you serving? Guatemala

Q5 What is your function or position? Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 16

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full-time at your base? 3

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 0

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? 0

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 1 - 2 years Additional comments: Mostly because of the challenge of raising financial support. It has cost them a lot.

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 1

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 0

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 0

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-enterprises etc.

1. Friends

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 60%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff? Lack of finances

Q17 How many times a year do you run the Discipleship Training School (DTS) at your location? At the moment we do not have trained personnel to run a DTS, so we do not have a DTS at the moment.

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in the DTS in your location? 16

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Word of mouth Additional comments: No way to put numbers in there.....

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer? 0

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 0

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 26-30%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes

Respondent #6: YWAM Liberia Costa Rica

- Started: Wednesday, November 09, 2022 7:48:11 PM
- Last Modified: Wednesday, November 09, 2022 7:52:07 PM
- Time Spent: 00:03:55

Q1 Name? Tony Del Rio

Q2 Age? 43

Q3 Nationality? Costa Rican

Q4 In which country are you serving? Costa Rica

Q5 What is your function or position? Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 5 years

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full time at your base? 8

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? None

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? 0

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 1 - 2 years

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 1

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 0

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 0

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro enterprises etc.

1. Friends
2. Family
3. Microenterprises

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 50%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Finance
2. Church Support
3. Family Support

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) in your locality? 2

Q18. In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in DTS in your locality? 21

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Social Networking

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer? 0

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 15

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 21-25%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes.

Respondent #7: YWAM Bluefields Nicaragua

- Started: Wednesday, November 09, 2022 7:51:37 PM
- Last Modified: Wednesday, November 09, 2022 8:02:24 PM
- Time Spent: 00:10:46

Q1 Name? Migdalia Amador

Q2 Age? 45 years old

Q3 Nationality? Nicaraguan

Q4 In which country are you serving? Nicaragua

Q5 What is your function or position? Co-director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 7 years

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full time at your base? 4

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 1

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? Thailand

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 1 - 2 years

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 0

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 1

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? None

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro enterprises etc.

1. Friends
2. Family
3. Small business

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 10%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Different call.
2. Lack of commitment
3. Fear

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) in your locality? 1

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained at the DTS in your locality? 18

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Social Networking

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer?

1. English course.

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 3

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 1-5%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes, thank you.

Respondent #8: YWAM Managua Nicaragua

- Started: Wednesday, November 09, 2022 8:23:42 PM
- Last Modified: Wednesday, November 09, 2022 8:36:33 PM
- Time Spent: 00:12:50

Q1 Name? Albania Palacios

Q2 Age? 43

Q3 Nationality? Nicaraguan

Q4 In which country are you serving? Nicaragua

Q5 What is your function or position? Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 8 years

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full time at your base? 2

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 1

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? Nepal

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 1 - 2 years

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 1

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 1

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 0

Q14 What are the main sources of support for your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro enterprises etc.

1. Friends

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 30%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Lack of Finance
2. Marriage
3. They want to study

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) in your locality? 1

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in DTS in your locality? 3

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Social Networking

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer?

1. Extension mission courses

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 0

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 1-5%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes.

Respondent #9: YWAM San Salvador El Salvador

- Started: Wednesday, November 09, 2022 9:50:46 PM
- Last Modified: Wednesday, November 09, 2022 10:09:52 PM
- Time Spent: 00:19:06

Q1 Name? Judy Guasca

Q2 Age? 41

Q3 Nationality? Colombian

Q4 In which country are you serving? El Salvador

Q5 What is your function or position? Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 14 years

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full time at your base? 14

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 0

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? 0

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? Additional comments: In the case of us, we have seen that they have a hard time giving a time commitment, even if they continue the following year. They just don't want to commit to their words.

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 4

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 2

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 0

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-businesses, etc.

1. Friends from the United States
2. Church of the United States
3. Family

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 10%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Finances monthly payment.
2. Personal frustrations
3. Desire to have their things e.g. a house etc.

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) in your locality? 2

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in the DTS in your locality? 50

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Word of mouth

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer?

1. Foundations to Counseling

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 0

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 0

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes.

Respondent #10: YWAM Antigua Guatemala

- Started: Thursday, November 10, 2022 9:24:47 AM
- Last Modified: Thursday, November 10, 2022 9:30:28 AM

- Time Spent: 00:05:40

Q1 Name? Susy de Ahlberg

Q2 Age? 46

Q3 Nationality? Salvadoran

Q4 In which country are you serving? Guatemala

Q5 What is your function or position? Co-Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 6

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full-time at your base? 7

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 0

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? 0

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 1 - 2 years

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 5

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 3

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 1

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-enterprises etc.

1. Friends
2. Family

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 20%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Relationships
2. Finances
3. Other interests

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) at your location? 1

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in DTS in your locality? 15

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Word of mouth

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer?

1. Teachers for the Nations
2. Bible School

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 4

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 1-5%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes.

Respondent #11: YWAM Limon Costa Rica

- Started: Thursday, November 10, 2022 12:38:54 PM
- Last Modified: Thursday, November 10, 2022 12:45:01 PM
- Time Spent: 00:06:06

Q1 Name? Joan Simarra

Q2 Age? 39

Q3 Nationality? Colombian

Q4 In which country are you serving? Costa Rica

Q5 What is your function or position? Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 5 years

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full-time at your base? 4

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 0

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? 0

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 6 months - 1 year

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 0

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 0

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 0

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro enterprises etc.

1. Friends
2. Churches in USA

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 80%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Lack of finances
2. Lack of family support
3. No clear vision

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) at your location? 2

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in DTS in your locality? 10

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Word of mouth and Social networking

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer? 0

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 0

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 11-15%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes, thank you very much!

Respondent #12: YWAM Santa Ana El Salvador

- Started: Friday, November 11, 2022 2:10:23 PM
- Last Modified: Friday, November 11, 2022 2:32:53 PM
- Time Spent: 00:22:29

Q1 Name? Paul Cardenas

Q2 Age? 40

Q3 Nationality? Peruvian

Q4 In which country are you serving? El Salvador

Q5 What is your function or position? Director

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 6

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full-time at your base? 7

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 0

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? 0

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? More than 5 years

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 2

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 0

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 0

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-enterprises, etc.

1. Family
2. Local friends
3. Foreign friends

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 30%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. For secular university studies
2. For better financial opportunities

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) at your location? 1

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained at the DTS in your location? In the 6 years that the base has 26 Central American students.

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Word of mouth

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer? 0

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 4

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 31-40%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes.

Respondent #13: YWAM Guatemala City, Guatemala

- Started: Sunday, November 13, 2022 10:38:30 PM
- Last Modified: Sunday, November 13, 2022 11:15:02 PM
- Time Spent: 00:36:31

Q1 Name? Carlos and Karla Garcia

Q2 Age? 46 and 43 years old

Q3 Nationality? Both Guatemalan

Q4 In which country are you serving? Guatemala

Q5 What is your function or position? Directors

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 5 years

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full-time at your base? 15

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 10

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Spain

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 3 - 5 years

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 10

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 8

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 2

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-enterprises, etc.

1. Family
2. Friends

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 30%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Family
2. Finances

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) at your location? 2

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained at the DTS in your location? 60

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Website Additional comments:

SST is the highest, Word of Mouth second highest, and the third is social networking.

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer?

1. Bible School for the Nations
2. Teachers for the Nations

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? We have had UofN post-DTS missionary training schools since 2020 and have had 15 Central Americans during this time.

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 41-50%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes.

Respondent #14: YWAM San Jose Costa Rica

- Started: Wednesday, November 16, 2022 8:50:36 PM
- Last Modified: Wednesday, November 16, 2022 9:12:01 PM
- Time Spent: 00:21:24

Q1 Name? Elena Espinoza

Q2 Age? 36 years old

Q3 Nationality? Salvadoran

Q4 In which country are you serving? Costa Rica

Q5 What is your function or position? Human Resources Coordinator

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 5 years in a row

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full-time at your base? 16

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent for long-term cross-cultural service? 3

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? Lebanon

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 3 - 5 years. Additional comments: We ask that they sign a commitment of 2 years and up to be considered long-term staff.

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 6

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? All

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? 2% Out of 10%

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-enterprises etc.

1. Family
2. Friends
3. Church

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 20%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. Conflict resolution/unmet expectations
2. Finances

3. Lack of vision

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct the Discipleship Training School (DTS) at your location? Approx. once every two years

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in DTS in your locality? Approx. 40% (40 out of 100)

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Social Networking

Additional comments: Social networks and websites are in the same category.

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer?

1. School of Frontier Missions
2. School of Dance

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? 20

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 21-25%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes, I would!

Respondent #15: YWAM Diriamba Nicaragua

- Started: Thursday, November 17, 2022 1:42:00 PM
- Last Modified: Thursday, November 17, 2022 2:01:50 PM
- Time Spent: 00:19:50

Q1 Name? Barbara Johnson

Q2 Age? 68

Q3 Nationality? USA

Q4 In which country are you serving? Nicaragua

Q5 What is your function or position? Co-founder

Q6 How many years have you served in this position? 33 years

Q7 How many of your Central American staff are currently serving full-time at your base? 22

Q8 How many Central American staff members from your location have you sent to serve cross-culturally on a long-term basis? 3

Q9 In which countries are Central American staff sent from your location serving with YWAM on a long-term basis? Iraq, Thailand, Nepal

Q10 What is the average commitment rate for full-time Central American staff at your location? 1 - 2 years Additional comments: Some have 10 years or more

Q11 How many of your current Central American staff have served more than 5 years with YWAM? 7

Q12 How many of your Central American staff are fully supported? 15

Q13 How many of your Central American staff are receiving substantial support from your local church? Possibly 4

Q14 What are the main sources of support from your staff? Example: Friends, family, local churches, micro-enterprises etc.

1. Friends
2. Family
3. Churches

Q15 Approximately what percentage of your Central American staff support comes from Central America? 80%

Q16 What are the top three reasons why your Central American staff do not continue as long-term staff?

1. call to another location
2. family needs
3. lack of support

Q17 How many times a year do you conduct Discipleship Training School (DTS) at your location? 1-2

Q18 In the last 10 years, how many Central Americans have been trained in DTS in your locality? about 90

Q19 How do you recruit your Central American students? Please rank each on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest. Social Networking

Additional comments: All of these things ... social networks, website, etc. Many come from others...

Q20 What other post-DTS UofN training schools does your base or campus offer?

1. Teachers for the Nations
2. Bible School for the Nations every 2 years.
3. Bible School every 2 years
4. BELT Seminars. several per year

Q21 In the last 10 years, how many Central American students have completed UofN post-DTS missionary training schools in your location? Not counting the seminars ... It would be about 150.

Q22 In the last 10 years, what percentage of Central American graduates have entered YWAM as full-time staff for a minimum of two years after training? 31-40%

Q23 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you like to receive a final copy of this study when it is completed? Yes.

APPENDIX B

EXECUTIVE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN GLOBAL MISSIONS PROPOSAL

During my thesis-project's research and analysis phase, it became clear that there was a need to develop an executive bachelor's degree program. A cohortative executive BA could be part of the solution to the problem this thesis-project endeavored to solve. A proposed name for this new pilot BA degree track could be the Executive Bachelor of Arts in Global Missions (ExecBAM). [7]

Why the ExecBAM? The following list identifies ten reasons why a Central American contextualized missions B.A. track is needed:

9. Currently, there is no systematic way or clear pre-determined BA track available to students in the UofN. The system is more geared toward the student mapping out their degree plan with counsel from an advisor and then trying to attend the various courses required through the UofN campus worldwide.
10. Many courses needed to complete a BA in the UofN are unavailable in Spanish.
11. Although some existing courses would help fulfill the desired outcomes, they are disjointed from one another, and many gaps would need to be filled.
12. The current BA offerings with the UofN are not tailored to meet the actual needs encountered on the ground in Central America.

[7]. The ExecBAM, including the six modules outlined in this section, is a pilot program that the author is proposing. The author would need to develop the ExecBAM pilot program in greater detail in collaboration with the UofN Dean of Christian Ministries and Provost.

13. Since it would be an executive BA, the students would complete the degree while actively serving in a missions role with YWAM. This would give immediate real-life missionary application to what they are learning.
14. The cohort model of the ExecBAM would be more conducive to Latin American group culture, where the students form relational bonds and encourage and walk through the study process together.
15. Assignments and internships can be incorporated with the local church, thus helping to build better relationships and missional culture in the Central American Church.
16. Since it would be a BA degree program, parents and the church are more apt to accept it as a serious vocational path.
17. The relational dynamics of the cohortative model with the intensives being held in various YWAM/UofN campuses throughout Central America create an incredible opportunity for missional networking and partnerships.
18. Depending on the number of students in the cohort, up to twenty to thirty capstone missional projects would be launched.
19. The ExecBAM program, future graduates, and projects have the potential to produce substantial fruit and impact both in Central America and missionary initiatives beyond the region's borders.

Executive Bachelor of Arts in Global Mission Overview

What would the Executive Bachelor of Arts in Global Mission look like, and what would the main components be? The ExecBAM would be a pilot program created to see an increase of Central American missionaries equipped and mobilized to pioneer new missional initiatives both

locally and abroad. During the course of study, each student would continue to be actively engaged in communication with their local church and serve in their ministry roles in YWAM.

After completing UofN core courses, the students would participate in six modules consisting of fifteen weeks each. Four modules would include two-week intensives and pre- and post-intensive assignments. The assignments will include a variety of learning, such as required reading, written assignments, Bible study, journals, research, and integration reflections. Two modules would be internships, with one being the capstone project. The relational dynamics of the cohort would enhance discovery and growth in the students as they learn from the teachers and one another. Compared to a typical Bachelor of Arts degree, the advantage of an Executive BA degree is that it has the potential to create a strong integration between each student's ministry experience and the new insights discovered, resulting in a valuable learning opportunity.

Being a pilot program, he ExecBAM will need to go through the appropriate degree approval process as outlined in the University of the Nations Reference Guide.[8] Likewise, The ExecBAM will need to meet the UofN prerequisite and core course credits required by the UofN. Here is an overview of the proposed pilot program.

BA Degree Program Requirements

Prerequisites

All students must have completed a secondary (high) school graduation or equivalent. Along with this, the Discipleship Training School (DTS) is a prerequisite for all other courses and all degree programs. The DTS includes a 12-week lecture phase and a 12-week field

[8] University of the Nations Provost Team, *University of the Nations Reference Guide* (Lausanne, Switzerland: YWAM/University of the Nations, 2021).

assignment (24 credits).[9] After the DTS, which the student can complete in over 600 YWAM/UofN locations around the world, for the next phase of the study program, the students would come together as a cohort to do the UofN's Foundations in Revival and Reformation course track.

Foundations in Revival and Reformation (40 credits UofN Core Courses)

The foundations in Revival and Reformations is an existing UofN track of three courses combined in one with a one-month field assignment, which includes three months of in-depth Bible study, three months of applied Biblical worldview, and three months of communication study. This helps the student to study the Bible better, learn how to apply a Biblical worldview to society and become a communicator that catalyzes change.[10] The breakdown of the three core courses included are as follows:

> **The Applied Christian Thinking** (12 credits). Courses meeting this requirement enable a student to develop a biblical understanding of worldviews, history, human institutions, culture, science, and the arts. Critical thinking skills are applied to current issues with a view to action.
> **The Bible requirement** (12 credits). Courses meeting this requirement enable a student to understand the message of the Bible and develop skills for a lifetime of Bible reading, memorization, meditation, and study, and to apply the Scriptures through further study, worship, prayer, and obedience. Students will grow in their relationship with God and in reverence and hunger for His Word.
> **The Communication requirement** (12 credits). Courses meeting this requirement enable a student to gain a biblical basis for communication, together with the basic skills of reading, researching, writing, and public speaking. It brings direct experience in interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cross-cultural communication, including the use of various media to communicate the message to a variety of audiences.[11]

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[9] University of the Nations Provost Team, *University of the Nations Reference Guide* (Lausanne, Switzerland: YWAM/University of the Nations, 2021), 280.

[10] "Foundations for Revival and Reformation," *YWAM UofN Kona*, accessed January 13, 2024, https://ywamkona.org/courses/foundations-for-revival-reformation/.

[11] University of the Nations Provost Team, *University of the Nations Reference Guide* (Lausanne, Switzerland: YWAM/University of the Nations, 2021), 281, (emphasis mine).

The field assignment (4 credits). In the field assignment, the student will serve in partnership with their local church. This will aid the students in forming better relationships with the local church and give them an opportunity to teach and apply the principles learned in the church and community.

The Executive Module Phase

In this executive phase of the ExecBAM, the student will actively be engaged in serving others through their ministry roles in YWAM. This creates a strong integration between each candidate's existing staff and ministry hands-on experience and the new insights being acquired, resulting in an opportunity for immediate application and a heightened learning experience. Modules one, two, three, and five consist of fifteen weeks each, including a two-week intensive. Module four is an eight-week field-based internship. Module six is the capstone project.

Module 1 God's Missional Call (12 credits)

At its core, the role of the family is the creation mandate found in Genesis 1:28 and 2:15. In God's original design, families are called to be fruitful and faithful stewards, multiplying the shalom of God throughout the earth. In this module, the students will learn that the missional mandate runs from Genesis to Revelations. From this, the students will gain an understanding that as part of this global family, they are God's junior partners called to steward and co-create with him. They will learn that the privilege, purpose, and responsibility of God's missional call is not theirs alone but also belongs to their family and the local church. Along with this, they will acquire relational insights and tools that will enable them to better engage with their family and the local church, bringing them into partnership with their call from God.

Module 2 Global Christianity and Frontier Missions (12 credits)

In this module, building on the last, the student's vision will be expanded to see the world through God's eyes, where they will gain a better understanding of who he is by how he is reflected and moving through the global family of God in the multicultural tapestry of the nations. Their passion for the nations will grow as they capture his heart and see the fingerprints and signposts he has left in unreached people groups. They will be equipped with tools to help bring God's Word to those who do not have the Bible in their mother tongue. They will learn principles and skills to share the Gospel in a cross-cultural context and to be catalysts in starting discipleship-making movements.

Module 3 Global Development and Discipling the Nations. (12 Credits)

Building on their understanding of worldview and the seven spheres of societal influence in this module, the students will capture God's heart and compassion for the spectrum of human problems in a hurting world. They will grapple with questions like: What are the root causes of these problems? Why is community development significant? Do nations and people groups have a distinct calling and purpose? What does it mean to disciple nations? By co-creating with God, they will discover his perspective and principles to develop innovative solutions to these problems for individuals, families, communities, and nations.

Module 4 Mission Internship (8 credits)

The students will complete one of the following three internships in this module:

Option one is an internship where the student partners with long-term workers in a nation among the least reached peoples of the world to apply the principles learned and Christ's

compassion to see the nations transformed for the glory of God. Where applicable, the student will be supervised by the UofN Missions Staff.

Option two is an internship in church planting or an established church setting under the oversight of the church leadership. Where applicable, the student will be supervised by the UofN Church Ministries staff. The internship can be arranged in the student's home church or other locations around the world. The assignment may range from research to teaching or church planting.

Option three is an internship with direct experience in a community where they will apply the development values, concepts, processes, skills, and principles needed to serve a community in growing towards a greater understanding and application of biblical approaches to development. Where applicable, the student will be supervised by the UofN Community Development staff.

Module 5 Global Leadership (12 Credits)

This module is designed to develop emerging multicultural leaders who will carry YWAM into the future. By engaging with the YWAM story, values, and DNA, the students will discover principles to avoid mission drift and stay mission true. The students will also learn the Biblical foundations of leadership and the character and conduct of a leader. Along with this, they will gain an understanding of apostolic versus institutional vision and be equipped with skills for multicultural team building and transformational leadership.

Module 6. Capstone Project (12 credits)

The capstone project is field-based, giving the students an opportunity to learn how to define a God-given vision, plan for its implementation, and prepare for the action steps necessary to turn the vision into reality. For the project, the students will integrate what they have learned from the previous modules and their life and ministry experiences. The project must be integrated into the corporate vision of the YWAM ministry where students serve and in cooperation with their local church and ministry partners. The student will be required to submit a written proposal that includes the rationale for the project, the desired outcome, the goals, the plan, and the steps to be taken. Following the initial 12 weeks of the project, the students will submit a written report and progress evaluation of the project.

Summary

The Executive Bachelor of Arts in Global Mission degree proposal shared is only a general overview. As outlined, it should meet the 132-credit threshold necessary for a BA/BS degree as stated in the University of the Nations Reference Guide in the Degree Program Requirements section.[12] The degree plan, especially the proposed executive six-module portion, needs further development, detail, and planning, including defined credit units and learning outcomes for each unit. Additionally, the proposal must undergo a rigorous approval process in consultation with the UofN Core Leadership Team and be approved by the College of Christian Ministries Dean and the UofN Provost.

[12] University of the Nations Provost Team, *University of the Nations Reference Guide* (Lausanne, Switzerland: YWAM/University of the Nations, 2021), 371-373.

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